

harmony celebrate age

JULY 2013 ₹ 30

The magazine for silver citizens

DIARY 100

ACE BUSINESS SCRIBE
P A SESHAN ON
'LEO'S' LONGEVITY

FOOTSTEPS

THEATRE ACTOR
SOHINI SENGUPTA
SHARES HOME TRUTHS

Story of a
diplomat
PAVAN KUMAR VARMA

Subscriber Copy Not For Resale



- TRACING THE ANCIENT TRADE ROUTE TO NALANDA
- MASTERPIECES OF TRADITIONAL INDIAN ARCHITECTURE

STEP ASIDE FOR THE SENIORS

Presenting the **Senior Privilege Account**, a savings account designed to help you make the most of this new phase of life.

Seniors enjoy:

- 20-60% discount on health check-ups at over 600 centres
- | Bill payment facility at branches | Preferential treatment
- | A Seniors ID card for emergency use
- | Guidance on writing a will*, and more

MEMBERSHIP OPEN
SENIORS ONLY
AGED 57 AND ABOVE

Badhti ka naam zindagi...



SENIOR PRIVILEGE ACCOUNT

Walking the talk

Sympathy should never be confused with empathy. While sympathy is emotional currency you can trade in when convenient, empathy can be a force to impel people towards real change; a change of attitudes, mindset and, eventually, social policy.

So it is with silver advocacy—while we are quick to sympathise with our elders, empathy is often quite another matter. Media, social workers and bureaucratic functionaries frequently wax eloquent about the challenges faced by our elders, but very little effort is made to actually understand the silver world.

One significant way to address this situation is for silver organisations, manned by the very constituency they represent, to become more active and share their concerns. This is now increasingly happening in India. But there's another equally significant factor to consider: the younger generation. There's an urgent need to get them on board, make them understand more vividly the life experienced by the generation that made it all possible for them. In short, to generate empathy to create a better future that embraces us all.

In our 'Orbit' column, we have reported a few times on the MIT Age Lab, which works to simulate the conditions of old age. Here, the youth don glasses that dim their vision, slip on shoes that addle their balance and experience physical conditions that challenge their spatial abilities, while their minds remain as they are—sharp, alive, ready to contribute.

Suresh Natarajan



The spirit behind this project has now caught on across the world. For instance, in the UK, the University Campus Suffolk (UCS) has launched a government-funded project where young people will take part in experiments to experience impaired hearing and vision and reduced mobility. Similarly in Europe, top-notch laboratories in France, Switzerland and Italy are embarking on initiatives to induce a greater understanding of silvers among the younger generations.

Yet, here at home, with our own premier institutes of technology and science, we display little inclination towards gerontology-based research, whether it is complicated projects like these or even simpler, statistical studies that could lend valuable insight into the silver experience. Our popular culture may make much of following in the footsteps of our elders but we have no real wish to discover what it's like to walk in their shoes. Now, that's the difference between sympathy and empathy—and it's also a missed opportunity.

Tina Ambani

A Harmony for Silvers Foundation Initiative

Harmony Celebrate Age—July 2013 Volume 10 Issue 2

Publisher **Dharmendra Bhandari** Editor **Tina Ambani** Deputy Editor **Arati Rajan Menon** Assistant Editor **Srirekha Pillai**

Copy Editor **Sai Prabha Kamath** Trainee Reporter (Mumbai) **Neeti Vijaykumar** Consultant Editors **Malvika Singh, Meeta Bhatti** Design Consultant **Jit Ray**

Head - Imaging **Anuradha Joshi** Studio Manager **Hareesh Patel** Graphic Designer **Dattaguru Redekar**

Production Manager **Rohidas Adavkar** Website Coordinator **Ajit Nair**

Assistant Vice-President, Business Development **Shrenik Mehta** Assistant Manager, Business Development **Kumar Kislay** Marketing Coordinator **Johnsi Nadar**

Editorial & Marketing Offices: Reliance Centre, 1st floor, 19, Walchand Hirachand Marg, Ballard Estate, Mumbai-400001. Tel: 91-22-30327108 (Editorial), 30327102 (Marketing). Email: contact.mag@harmonyindia.org **Printed and published** by Dharmendra Bhandari on behalf of the owners, Harmony for Silvers Foundation

Printed at Thomson Press India Ltd, 18-35, Milestone, Delhi-Mathura Road, Faridabad-121007 (Haryana). **Published** at Reliance Energy Centre, Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400055. **Disclaimer:** The material provided by *Harmony* is not a substitute for professional opinions. Readers are advised to seek appropriate advice from qualified and licensed professionals in the concerned field. © Harmony for Silvers Foundation. All rights reserved worldwide. Reproduction in any manner is prohibited. *Harmony* does not take responsibility for returning unsolicited publication material. www.harmonyindia.org

index

features

34 . Diary 100: Veteran finance journalist P A Seshan looks back upon his glorious career

42 . Footsteps: Sohini Sengupta takes the centrestage with her theatre actor parents

54 . Journey: Tracing an ancient trade route to Nalanda through Patna

66 . Architecture: A close look at the centuries-old evolution of stone art



46
cover
feature

Diplomat-author Pavan Kumar Varma has many feathers in his cap

Cover photograph by Sanjay Kurl

every issue

7 . ORBIT: News, views, people, research, trends and tips from around the world

20 . YOUR SPACE: Reach out to fellow silvers with your inspiring stories

59 . ETCETERA: Culture, leisure, lifestyle, books, buzz and miscellany

80 . SPEAK: Retd Col Shivraj Kumar vows to make Indian cities poster-free zones



WEB EXCLUSIVES www.harmonyindia.org



LENS ART

Shobha Deepak Singh captures dancers in action through movement photography

GARDEN OF EDEN

With over 700 plants, Gaysu Arvind shares her terrace gardening experiences

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ASSISTANCE CONTACT: Harmonycare, Living Media India Ltd, A-61, Sector 57, Noida (Uttar Pradesh) - 201301.

Toll-free: 1800 1800 100 Phones: New Delhi: (0120) 2479900 from Delhi and Faridabad; (0120) 2479900 from Rest of India

Fax: (0120) 4078080; **Kolkata:** 033-22827695 Fax: 22828949; **Bengaluru:** 080-2212448, 22213037, Fax: 2218335;

Mumbai: 022-66063355 Fax: 24444358; **Chennai:** 044-28478525 Fax: 24361942; Email: harmonycare@intoday.com

Saat^{Ka} Jadoo

Union
DOUBLE
Deposit Scheme



Ek lagayein, Duguna paayein.

**Double your fixed deposit amount in just 7 years and 7 months.
Interest @ 9.25% p.a.**

- For senior citizens amount doubles in just 7 years and 3 months
- Interest rate for senior citizens @ 9.75% p.a. • Maximum Deposit Rs. 15 Lakh

यूनियन बैंक
ऑफ़ इंडिया
अच्छे लोग, अच्छा बैंक



Union Bank
of India
Good people to bank with

Helpline Nos.: **1800 22 2244** (Toll free no.) | **022 2575 1500** (Chargeable)
022 2571 9600 (For NRIs) | www.unionbankofindia.co.in

Conditions apply

column one

Time management is his forte and Pavan Kumar Varma knows it. "I believe a day has 28 hours," says the career diplomat and prolific writer, on our cover this month. In his new book, he adapts Chanakya's ancient political strategies to India's contemporary challenges. "If you love something, you will always find time for it," he emphasises in "Chanakya Calling". "Those who say they can't are lying or disorganised or not sufficiently disciplined."

Our centenarian of the month P A Seshan would undoubtedly agree. The revered 'Leo', a giant in financial journalism, continues to "Write On!" regardless of increasing years and diminishing vision. And while his daily routine may have changed over time, "my work did not"; indeed, Seshan remains as tough a taskmaster and stickler for discipline as he ever was. Echoing his stick-to-itiveness is Col (retd) Shivraj Kumar, featured in 'Speak'. Despite having retired from the Army three decades ago, the octogenarian still fights the good fight: his mission is to keep the Capital free of posters and hoardings; his comrade in arms, 76 year-old wife Laxmi.

Elsewhere in the magazine, Sohini Sengupta follows in the 'Footsteps' of her beloved parents, eminent Bengali theatre personalities Rudraprasad and Swatilekha Sengupta; Susan Visvanathan traces the ancient route to Nalanda through packed and perspiring Patna; and economist Priya Desai urges you to get savvy about mediclaim policies. Eye candy for the month: a riveting photo spread of the masterpieces of Indian architecture. Enjoy the 'Rock Concert' in your favourite magazine!

—Arati Rajan Menon

I am 58 years old and accept ageing as God's grace. I try to live life to the fullest and enjoy whatever I have instead of crying over what I do not. My message to all is to keep going even as you age. Don't worry about criticism or gloat over praise; just do what you believe is right. Don't worry about what will happen after you are gone, because when you return to dust, you will feel no praise or criticism. Don't worry too much about your children, for they will have their own destiny and find their own way. Just help them grow into responsible, caring and productive human beings, but never be their slave. Don't expect too much from your children. Caring children could get too busy with their lives and might not be able to help you, and those who are uncaring may fight over your assets while you are still alive.

As you grow older, don't trade your health for wealth, because money may not be able to buy you health. Even if you had a thousand hectares of good farmland, you can only consume one quart of rice daily; even if you had a thousand mansions, you need only 3 sq m of space to rest at night. Just ensure you have enough to live happily.

Every family has its own problems. Don't compete with others over fame or social status but challenge others over happiness, health and longevity. Don't worry about the things you can't change, because worrying doesn't help and will affect your health. You have to create your own well-being and find your own happiness. With good mood, adequate exercise, lots of sun and good food, you will enjoy years of long healthy life. Above all, learn to cherish the goodness around you: your family and friends.

Alok Tholiya

Via email

ERRATUM

In 'Proactive' ("Green Crusaders") in the June 2013 issue, we inadvertently mentioned that the Khatri from Mumbai have worked on an eco project in the Sanjay Gandhi National Park. The Khatri have, in fact, never worked in the park.

We regret the error.

—Editors

CONTRIBUTOR



Prof Susan Visvanathan, who takes us on a 'Journey' to Nalanda this month, is an Indian sociologist, social anthropologist and fiction writer. Her first book *Christians of Kerala: History, Belief and Ritual among the Yakoba* is a path-breaking work in the field of sociology of religion. She was a Charles Wallace Fellow to Queens University, Belfast, in 1997. Visvanathan has also been a visiting professor to Maison des Sciences de L'Homme, Paris (2004), University Paris XIII (2011) and guest professor to Free University, Berlin (2011). She has been an honorary consultant to the World Council of Churches, Geneva (1987-89); consultant to the Oxford University Press, New Delhi (1994-1999; and 2009 onwards), and consultant to Free University, Berlin (2011). Currently, she teaches at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University. She also writes fiction during her winter and summer breaks from the university, extending sociological and theoretical concerns in the more vivid prose of literary fiction. Her works of fiction include *Something Barely Remembered*, *The Visiting Moon*, *Phosphorous and Stone*, and *The Seine at Noon*.



Price Starting from
₹ 27.50 Lakhs* (Basic Cost)

Specialised Services for Senior Citizens*

Centralised Kitchen with Common Dining Facilities
 Housekeeping & Maintenance | Supportive Health care Services
 24 X 7 Security | Transport Facilities | Property Management Services
 Concierge Desk | Multi-purpose Recreation Hall | Geriatric Fitness Centre

Bookings open



Devanahalli, Bengaluru
 314 Apartments of 1, 2 & 3 BHK



Sholinganallur, Chennai
 137 Studio Apartments of 1 BHK



Sulur, Coimbatore
 21 Villas,
 160 Apartments of 1, 2 & 3 BHK

Serene Pelican II

Pondicherry
 119 Independent &
 Semi-independent Villas

SERENE ADINATH

Vandalur, Chennai
 232 Apartments of 1, 2 & 3 BHK

Call us on **Toll Free: 1800 102 4010** Tel: **044 4901 4020**

(All India)

*The basic cost varies with locations & as mentioned in Agreement

www.sereneretirement.com

Bengaluru | Coimbatore | Chennai | Pondicherry | Soon in Hyderabad & Kanchipuram



Covai Senior Care Constructions Pvt. Ltd.

Chennai Office: No. 9B, B-Block, Navin's Presidium, No. 103, Nelson Manikkam Road,
 Aminjikarai, Chennai - 600 029.

H.O. - Coimbatore: Tel: +91 422 6572 625 / 2312 367 E-mail: info@covairop.com

Branch Offices: Chennai | Hyderabad | Bengaluru

Disclaimer: This ad is conceptual in nature & is by no means a legal offering. The company have the right to change, alter, delete or add any specifications mentioned herein.



Experience

A second childhood

Wouldn't it be great to have a second childhood? To start life afresh? Because at Harmony, a magazine for people above fifty five, we believe that age is in the mind. Which is why, you should live young.

Visit us at : www.harmonyindia.org

harmony
celebrate age



► NEWSWORTHY

Godspeed

Your government may help you get closer to God—if you live in the desert state. The **Rajasthan government has announced a pilgrimage scheme for silvers to a variety of destinations across India**, from Jagannathpuri, Rameshwaram and Vaishno Devi to Tirupati, Gaya, Varanasi, Amritsar and Shirdi. According to reports, the state will cover the entire travel-

ling expenses of 100,000 'selected' candidates per year; you just have to be over the age of 60. If you are over 65, you can even take a companion (between the ages of 18 and 50) with you. Divisional commissioners and district collectors have already been directed to implement the scheme; contact your local authorities to find out if you make the cut.



The command centre

For what scientists are calling a 'biological command centre', it's a rather unassuming part of the anatomy. But the almond-sized part of our brain called **the hypothalamus may allow us to 'control' the ageing process**—by 'tweaking' it, scientists from the Albert Einstein College of Medicine in New York were able to extend the lifespan of mice. During their study, they discovered that a chemical called NF-kB became more active in the hypothalamus of mice over time. When they blocked the substance, mice lived up to 20 per cent longer; even more

significant, they didn't suffer age-related ailments like loss of memory, and bone and muscle weakness. And when they boosted NF-kB in mice, they all died faster. "Our study supports the idea that ageing is more than a passive deterioration of different tissues," study author Dongsheng Cai writes in journal *Nature*. "It is under control and can be manipulated. It's clear from our study that many aspects of ageing are controlled by the hypothalamus. What's exciting is that it's possible, at least in mice, to alter signalling within the hypothalamus to slow down the ageing process and increase longevity."

LONG LIFE, LOW RISK: RESEARCHERS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF EXETER MEDICINE SCHOOL IN THE UK HAVE ESTABLISHED THAT PEOPLE WHOSE PARENTS LIVE LONGER ARE LESS LIKELY TO BE DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER. IN FACT, FOR EACH DECADE THAT A PARENT LIVES BEYOND THE AGE OF 65, A PERSON'S MORTALITY RATE FALLS BY 19 PER CENT.

Tick-tock

The biological clock is more than just a catchphrase; it could be a reliable predictor of our entire life. Scientists at the University of Chicago have discovered that **the timing of the ageing process may be run by our biological clocks as accurately as predetermined genetic events, like puberty**. In a media release by the university, study author Leonid Gavrilov says, "Previously, we believed that the early stages of human development were genetically programmed and could be accurately predicted, while ageing events like menopause took place



more randomly as bodies wear out. However, we have found that age at menopause has surprisingly small variability as if it is determined by biological clocks rather than by random loss of oocytes." The significance of this is tremendous, as Gavrilov points out. "If ageing is a wearing-out process, like in cars and other machines, the emphasis should be on maintenance and repair through stem cells and other research. However, if ageing is a genetic programme, the emphasis should be on identification of 'ageing' genes and attempts to re-programme them."



A FOR ARUNACHAL: ARUNACHAL PRADESH HAS BECOME THE FIRST STATE TO INTRODUCE E-GPF, FACILITATING ONLINE ACCESS FOR GPF (GENERAL PROVIDENT FUND) ACCOUNTS THROUGH ITS REDESIGNED WEBSITE: WWW.ARUNACHALFINANCE.IN. THIS WILL HELP THE PUBLIC ACCESS ALL UPDATED FISCAL INFORMATION, INCLUDING PENSION ACCOUNTS, AND FACILITATE FASTER DISPOSAL OF RTI CASES.

White lies



Honesty may be the best policy—but not if you're a caregiver. A new survey by US-based website *AgingCare.com* reveals that **dishonesty is extremely prevalent when caring for ailing silvers**. The poll of over 700 Americans taking care of an elderly parent or family member revealed that 73 per cent lie to the person in their care, with 43 per cent doing it on a regular basis. Interestingly, over 50 per cent of those who admit to lying believe it is justified because it is for the

elder's own good with only 28 per cent feeling any guilt about it. Even more revealing is what they actually lie about: 65 per cent lie about their own feelings; 39 per cent lie about other family members; 20 per cent lie about their loved one's health or well-being; and just 10 per cent lie about their loved one's medical reports or test results. With over 6 million regular visitors, *AgingCare.com* is a free online resource for caregivers, giving them a platform to share their feelings and worries candidly without fear of censure or guilt.

The world's their stage

Most of them had never stepped on stage before they joined Japanese theatre director Yukio Ninagawa's Saitama Gold Theatre. But after bringing audiences to their feet in Japan, these silvers are now set to conquer theatres across the world. As news agency AFP reports, Ninagawa, now 77, established this troupe of actors—all over 55, with an average age of 74—seven years ago as an experiment to create a new style of theatre that would see older people take roles not usually open to them and cast the spotlight on the issue of ageing. “None of them were trained, yet I found they were capable of bringing a huge range of emotions to bear,” he says. “Acting gives everyone vigour and is proof that people can grow at any time in their lives.” After five successful productions in their home country, the troupe performed the avant-garde play *Ravens, We Shall Load Bullets!* in



Paris this June, which tells the story of the struggle in Japan against societal repression after World War II. The

Saitama Gold Theatre will next be seen in a series of Asian countries, beginning with Singapore.



Sex on stage

It won rave reviews in Germany and Singapore. And not surprisingly, *All The Sex I've Ever Had*, a revelatory show where silvers discuss their carnal relationships, brought audiences in Glasgow to their feet at The Arches' Behaviour Festival 2013 in May. An ongoing project to dispel the myth that pensioners don't have—and enjoy—sex and examine behavioural differences across the world, artistic director Darren O'Donnell gets six pensioners from the host city to take the stage in a panel format to discuss their sex lives, now, then and in the future. “This is all about age and the fact that we don't discuss sexuality with seniors,” O'Donnell tells London newspaper *The Independent*. “We want people to understand what it is like to be an older person and contemplate sex. This is as much about being interested in characters as in people. It instigates a conversation.” The conversation will continue in the months ahead in Ghent (Belgium), Prague, London and Philadelphia.

Doppelganger

Several actors have spoken out about the struggles of the older woman in Hollywood—the diminishing roles and typecasting. One actor, though, has gone a step further by playing out her plight on screen. In *The Congress*, a part live-action, part-animation, part-science fiction satire directed by avant-garde director Ari Folman, 47 year-old Robin Wright plays herself, an actor with her career on the slide, whose agent persuades her to become a studio-owned computer avatar because all other roles have simply dried up. Folman tells *The New York Times* that he was inspired to make the satire on Hollywood when he met an ageing, forgotten actress at Cannes five years ago. Wright's take? "I can identify with the character's plight," she confesses to the newspaper. "I'm not bankable. I remember trying to get movies made and it's like, 'Eh, let's replace her with so-and-so because she's not as young and hot as she used to be.' I've been there and heard that. So it's easy to play it." You can catch a glimpse of the movie at www.youtube.com/watch?v=zoCuOJvfMA



Recipe for success

When her mother was diagnosed with malnutrition, it was a wake-up call for food industry professional Elizabeth Jones, who established **On the Menu**, a range of nutritious and affordable meals created for silvers. These frozen meals served in manageable single portions are low in salt and saturated fat and high on taste and colour to entice jaded silver taste buds, as London newspaper *The Daily Mail* reports. The containers too are silver-friendly with a large pull-tab for easy opening and bold lettering. Main courses range from pot roast chicken and savoury minced beef to herb-crusted fish and pork and apple casserole, all served with plenty of vegetables while the dessert selection features favourites like fruit sponge and apple custard crumble. "To eat at least one hot, nutritious meal a day is really important; the statistics for malnourishment of people over the age of 65 who live at home are horrifying and increase with age," says Jones. "We use a lot of herbs and flavoursome vegetables to capture flavour. And the meals look tasty; if food looks attractive, it's more likely to get eaten." On The Menu meals are available in select supermarkets across the UK; silvers can also order meals directly from website onthemenufood.com

DECODING THE DRAGON:

INTERNATIONAL SENIOR LIVING EXPERT BROMME H COLE HAS PUBLISHED *ENTER THE AGEING DRAGON*, THE FIRST BOOK ON GERIATRIC CARE IN CHINA THAT EXAMINES THE CHALLENGES FACING THE COUNTRY AND STRATEGIES TO TACKLE THEM.





Not yet

While lifespan is a finite commodity, hope apparently is not. The latest edition of the annual British Social Attitudes Survey states that **many silvers are unwilling to face their own mortality, believing that death is still very far away.** While their optimism is indeed laudable, such an attitude has other, less desirable, consequences. For instance, according to the survey of over 2,000 Britons, published online at www.britsocat.com, 23 per cent of people over the age of 75 have not discussed their wishes around dying or planned for their end-of-life care; while only

35 per cent have a will and only 11 per cent have written down their wishes for funeral plans. "As a nation too many of us are still shunning the conversations that can help avoid heartbreak and regret at the end of life," Eve Richardson, chief executive of the Dying Matters Coalition, a group comprising charities, and health and social care workers, tells Edinburgh newspaper *The Scotsman*. "You don't have to be ill or dying to make plans for your future, which is why we are calling on people across the country to take practical steps by writing a will or planning their future care."

European calculus

With longer lifespans, the **old-age dependency ratio**, which measures the number of retired people as a share of those of working age, is expected to rise sharply across the globe.

Union reveal that across the 27 member countries, the ratio rose to 26.8 per cent this year from 21.1 per cent 20 years ago, a number that will only climb with time. However, there was a considerable

26.8 %

is the age-dependency ratio in the European Union, across 27 member countries, compared to 21.1 per cent 20 years back

$$\text{Aged dependency ratio} = \frac{\text{number of people aged 65 and over}}{\text{number of people aged 15 - 64}} \times 100$$

Expressed as a percentage, the higher the ratio, the greater would be the pension, healthcare and social security costs for the country. Recent statistics published by the European

degree of divergence among countries—while the ratio was over 30 per cent for Germany and Italy, it was under 20 per cent for Ireland and Cyprus. In fact, Ireland was the

only European state where the ratio actually fell, to 17.9 per cent from 18.3 per cent. You can read the entire report at epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu

Arid outlook

Life is meaningless without quality. A case in point is **sub-Saharan Africa, where growing lifespan is accompanied by disease and debility.** According to a study conducted by the University of Pennsylvania in Malawi, many adults over the age of 45 have limited functional ability comparable to that of octogenarians in the US. For instance, 45 year-old women in rural Malawi are expected to spend 58 per cent of their estimated remaining 28 years with a physical disability and 45 year-old men are expected to live 41 per cent of their remaining 25.4 years with functional limitations. Also, on average, a 45 year-old woman in Malawi will spend 2.7 years of her life with a moderate functional limitation and 0.6 years with a severe functional limitation before she reaches 55; for a 45 year-old man, the corresponding values are 1.6 and 0.4 years. "Individuals in this population experience a lengthy struggle with disabling conditions in adulthood, with high probabilities of relapsing between states of functional limitation," writes lead author Collin Payne in journal *PLOS Medicine*. "This study emphasises that health policy should urgently address not just longevity but disability in older persons."



BON VOYAGE: ACCORDING TO THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM, OUT OF 15 MILLION OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS FROM INDIA IN 2012, AT LEAST 1.3 MILLION WERE ABOVE 60 YEARS OF AGE. THE MINISTRY ESTIMATES THAT THIS NUMBER IS LIKELY TO RISE TO 7.3 MILLION BY 2030.



REALLY? HOLLYWOOD CELEBRITIES ARE INCREASINGLY RAVING ABOUT 'SEMEN FACIALS' TO KEEP THEIR SKIN LOOKING YOUNG. SEMEN CONTAINS SPERMINE, WHICH IS RICH IN ANTIOXIDANTS, AND THE SPAS IN NEW YORK HAVE COTTONED ON TO THE FACT. IT'S SAFE TO ASSUME THAT INDIAN SALONS WON'T BE OFFERING THESE FACIALS ANYTIME SOON!



His fix

It's like Botox in a jar—and it's exclusively for men. The latest offering from British cosmetic company Nip+Fab's Nip+Man range is **Manotox, an anti-ageing moisturiser that claims to erase wrinkles and fine lines without surgery.** In a media release, the company claims that the product's success lies in its key ingredients: 'liftonin', which literally scours away fine lines and wrinkles, and 'gransil' to smoothen, plump and firm the skin. There's also a bunch of sea minerals thrown in to give the skin a fresher look. Interested? Manotox costs £ 20 (about ₹ 1,700) and is available online at www.nipandfab.com

Ice anti-age

The pristine purity of the Arctic in a bottle—that's the promise of the **anti-ageing Ice Perfect Trio from Polaar, the first brand in the world to 'harness' polar ingredients for beauty products.** The trio comprises a radiance cream, serum and eye contour treatments to target wrinkles and enhance skin radiance. What gives them their punch (and hefty price tag, no doubt) is that they contain Arctic Cotton, a plant packed with antioxidants that thrives in extreme conditions; Siberian olive oil; and PPNF3, a peptide extracted

from a cryophilic organism (one that lives in extreme cold) that has restorative properties. The unique range, which is not yet available for sale online, is the brainchild of French explorer Daniel Kurbiel, who comes from a family of scientists involved in arctic research for 35 years. "The fact that these microorganisms could survive in conditions so bad is what makes them so good and potent as active ingredients in beauty products," he says in a media release. "No one has done this before." To learn more, go to www.polaar.com



Remember yesterday. Create an online journal and post your favourite memories. Get your grandkids to help you and make it a family project—it's not just a valuable legacy but a fantastic way to combat cognitive problems and get some digital training in the process. For instance, NGO Age UK is launching a project to get thousands of Britons to reminisce about their past via the Internet. "Memories are incredibly powerful and reminiscing about happy times or important people is often inspired by music, film, literature, or images," goes a media release from the organisation. "So we're going to use the power of memories to show older people how fun and useful technology can be. What's more, reminiscence therapy is a great tool to battle dementia."



FACTS

- » At least half a barrel of crude oil is required to produce rubber for one truck tyre.
- » In India, the number of vehicles manufactured—from two-wheelers to six-wheelers—has risen to 33 million, for which an estimated 80 million tyres have been produced.

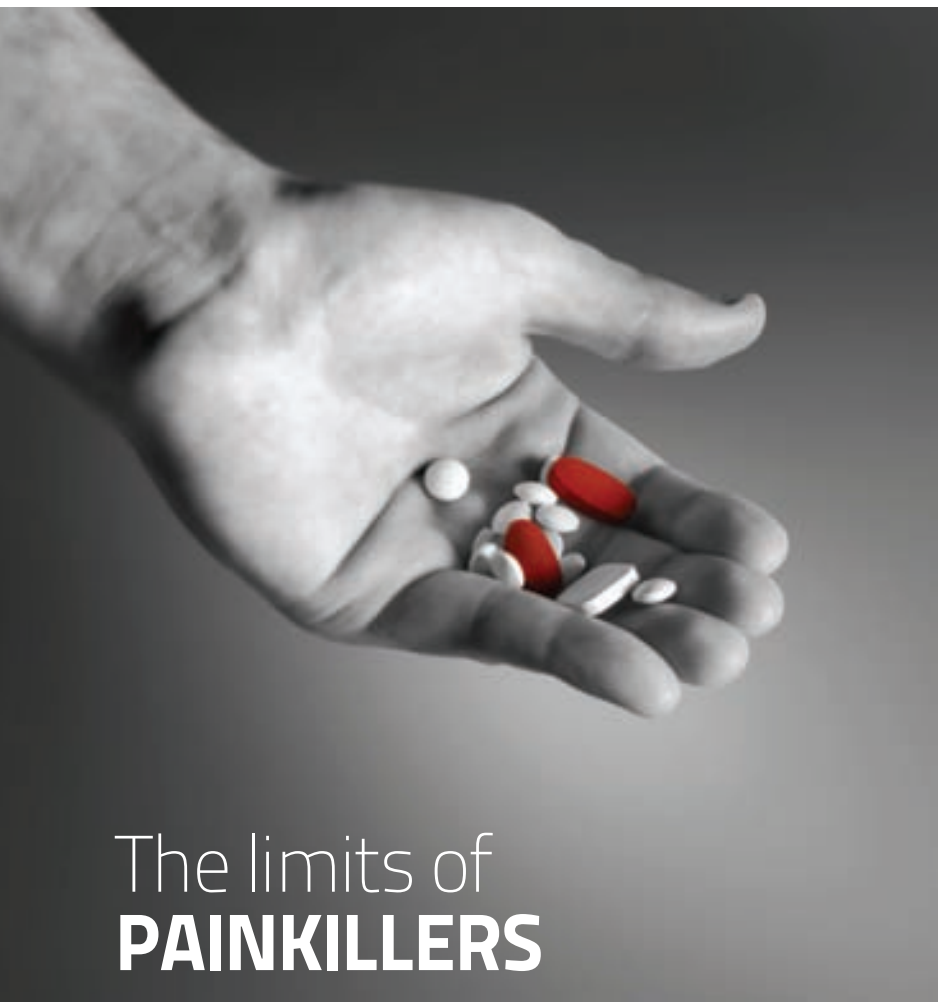
Then: Old rubber tyre Now: Footrest or ottoman

Reduce your carbon footprint this monsoon season by upcycling non-biodegradable rubber tyres into classy rope-wound footrests. All you need are two round hardboards with diameters the same as the tyre, a long spool of rope, superglue and some nails. First, place the hardboard on top of the tyre, drill four holes and nail it so it is held fast to the tyre; repeat with the second on the other side to form two bases like a drum. Next, with

superglue in one hand, start coiling the rope from the top of the hardboard. Use glue every now and then so the coils don't come loose. Wind all the way till the edge of the board and then start coiling on the tyre till it is fully covered. If coiling the rope seems like too much work, you could settle for painting the tyre with bright colours and topping it off with a round cushion to match. Now you can sit pretty!

MORE RECYCLING IDEAS...

1. SMALLER TYRES MAKE GREAT PLANTERS, WHETHER AS A VERTICAL WALL HANGING DECORATION OR AN ECO-FRIENDLY POT IN YOUR GARDEN.
2. IF YOU HAVE PETS, MAKE THEM A NEW BED BY FIXING A BASE, CUTTING THE RIMS OF THE TYRE ON THE TOP SO IT LOOKS LIKE A WIDE BARREL, AND ADDING SOME CUSHIONS INSIDE.



The limits of **PAINKILLERS**

Arthritis patients may have to be wary of high amounts of daily doses of painkillers, especially if they are prone to heart ailments. Affecting about 9 million people in India, rheumatoid arthritis is more prevalent in Indian women than men. **By consuming large doses of painkillers for arthritis, such as ibuprofen, chances of heart attacks or strokes are known to go up by 40 per cent.** Researchers at the University of Oxford studied over 350,000 patients who took prescribed doses of these non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). While such drugs in their prescribed dose could be beneficial for those who suffer from severe arthritis, researchers suggest that high doses for low or medium intensity arthritis patients

could be avoided. It has been revealed that when patients who had a moderate risk of heart disease were given a year's treatment of 2,400 mg ibuprofen or 150 mg of diclofenac every day, the risk of cardiac attacks went up to 11 for every 1,000 people as opposed to eight for every 1,000 people without the treatment. One in three of those were likely to have fatal attacks. The risk of heart failure and other complications such as bleeding ulcers were doubled from three in 1,000 people to seven. This is the maximum dose that is usually prescribed, and twice the quantity that is allowed to be sold over the counter. Almost a decade ago, Vioxx, another drug for arthritis, was withdrawn from the market when it was found that it doubled the chances of cardiac problems.

PROSTATE IMPACT

Silvers who opt for aggressive prostate cancer treatments should reconsider their options if they are already suffering from other health conditions. According to a recently conducted study, the risk of succumbing to low or medium risk prostate cancer is relatively lower compared to dying from other existing health problems. The Department of Urology at the University of California - Los Angeles published a study that looked at the long-term survival outcome of about 3,000 elderly men diagnosed with prostate cancer in the 1990s. These men each had three or more underlying health conditions such as diabetes, arthritis or heart problems. The researchers plotted their survival outcome for 14 years from the time of their diagnosis. The results showed that for men between 60 and 74 years of age, the risk of dying in 10 years from their ailments other than prostate cancer was 40 per cent, while for men older than 75, it was 71 per cent. This was found to be in sharp contrast with the 14-year risk of dying from low or intermediate risk of prostate cancer, which stands at 3 per cent for men below 75 years of age and 7 per cent for those above 75 years. However, high-risk prostate cancer patients are more likely to benefit from aggressive treatment, as the risk of death from cancer stood at 18 per cent if untreated. Thus, **researchers conclude that prostate cancer can be left untreated unless it is high-risk**, compared to treating the cancer and enduring the major side effects. Low or medium risk cancer patients can go for regular biopsies, with necessary intervention only when the disease progresses.



Anaesthesia attack

Dementia affected 3.7 million people in India in 2010, according to the Alzheimer's and Related Disorders Society of India. This number is set to double in the next decade. And according to a new study, there's a chance it could be because of the use of general anaesthesia. Previous studies have found that elderly patients who have undergone major surgeries are more likely to suffer from post-operative cognitive dysfunction (POCD), which results in some form of mental decline in later years. Now, there is evidence of **a link between dementia and the use of general anaesthesia in older adults** over the age of 70. In a long-term research project, Francois Sztark at

the University of Bordeaux, France, studied about 7,000 people aged 65 and above from the cities of Bordeaux, Dijon and Montpellier. Of these, 632 developed some form of mental deterioration, and most were exposed to general anaesthesia during the study. It was concluded that those who were administered anaesthesia in the span of one or two years during the study were 35 per cent more likely to develop symptoms for dementia. The reasons for this are still unclear and under research. According to previous research, some anaesthetics cause protein tangles in the brain and affect neural tissues, causing them to inflame, which is said to be an early sign of Alzheimer's.

MOST COMMUNICABLE DISEASES SILVERS SUFFER FROM ARE PREVENTABLE IF, ALONG WITH REGULAR EXERCISE AND A NUTRITIONAL DIET, PROPER IMMUNISATION IS PROVIDED. WITH THIS IN MIND, DR V S NATARAJAN, A GERIATRIC MEDICINE SPECIALIST AND COLUMNIST FOR HARMONY-CELEBRATE AGE, HAS STARTED A GERIATRIC IMMUNISATION CENTRE IN CHENNAI TO ADMINISTER VACCINATIONS AGAINST INFLUENZA, PNEUMONIA, TETANUS, TYPHOID AND HEPATITIS B. IN THE PAST TOO, DR NATARAJAN HAS CONDUCTED VACCINATION CAMPS TO RAISE AWARENESS ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF TIMELY VACCINATION OF ADULTS, SENIOR CITIZENS IN PARTICULAR. THE CENTRE WAS INAUGURATED ON 12 JUNE 2013 AT ADHIPARASAKTHI CLINIC IN KILPAUK, CHENNAI. CALL 044-26412030

A new study suggests that **post-menopausal women who are at risk of osteoporotic bone-thinning can strengthen their bones and muscles by working out in the pool**. Conducted by Linda Moreira and her team at the Universidade Federal de São Paulo, Brazil, the study was carried out on about 100 inactive women aged between 50 and 60 years. They were given Vitamin D3 and calcium every day, and a part of the group was enrolled in an aquatic exercise programme. Those who exercised had a whopping 86 per cent drop in falls and improved flexibility compared to the inactive group.



Art is all

Living in a quiet suburb in Bengaluru, **B V Pandurang Rao**, 69, doesn't look like the creator of the most talked about caricature in India. A while ago, he won the bronze medal at the 9th FCW International Cartoon Competition in Beijing for a caricature of Dr Manmohan Singh. The entire caricature, except the PM's forehead, is made of only straight lines. It's a testimony to how he views his creativity: simple innovations implemented with professionalism and completeness.

With a flair for the dramatic, Rao unveils his latest work, which entered *The Limca Book of Records* this year as the largest calendar. The environment is something he feels very strongly about and the theme for his massive calendar is World Environment Day. The entire calendar is handmade (not a single bit of printed material), with each page bearing a striking cartoon. A man cutting down trees shaped like lungs, white ducks entering a river for a swim only to exit completely dirty, a crane flying among a barren land of tree stumps with her nest hanging from her beak; simple images that have the impact of recall.

Pandurang Rao's workplace is a room in his house, full of his drawings and cartoons of all sizes, shapes and subjects. "I was always chosen to sketch and paint posters in school," says the artist, who later studied mechanical engineering and was trained in technical drawing. "In college, when I wasn't playing cricket, I was drawing cartoons." Although a professional path in cartooning didn't materialise, the urge to draw remained strong. He began his career at Bhilai Steel Plant in Madhya Pradesh, where he lived for the next 36 years.

Beginning as a shop floor worker in production, Rao's talents were found



more suitable for public relations. And the many people he met on the job ensured there was never a dearth of cartooning material. He showed at some local exhibitions and made regular cartoons for the in-house publications characteristic of large industrial townships. Rao also played cricket for the Madhya Pradesh division (he was a state panel umpire for 19 years) and made flip-books on cricket players' movements. He gives his head Pradeep Singh the credit of letting him do what pleased him the most. "He motivated me to think beyond in-house magazines and send my work all over the world," he says. "Even as a hobby, I learnt to constantly push limits."

With 37 international awards in Brazil, Russia, Portugal, Israel and Turkey, among other countries, over 40 solo exhibitions and over 7,000 cartoons in all sorts of publications, today, Rao is arguably India's most prolific hobby cartoonist. He feels professional cartoonists have to bear



the burden of continuously shelling out politically and socially relevant cartoons. Thus, he cherishes the freedom to be inspired by the world around him and pursue his dream on his own terms.

A treasured memory for Rao is receiving the Cartoon Watch Lifetime Achievement Award along with Ajit Ninan from Dr A P J Abdul Kalam. He gave the former president a caricature that has found its way to the museum in Dr Kalam's home in Ramanagaram. There's one more achievement left to share with us. Rao takes out a small plastic box and a bunch of flip-books tumble out. He looks for the one ranked in *The Limca Book of Records* as the smallest flip-book. It's 0.5 × 1.35 cm, with a delightful stick-figure cricketer playing a few strokes before being clean bowled. "Only for the thrill of making a record!" he exults. "Once you make one, the rush is so addictive that you have to make and break more!"

—Jaideep Khare

BIRTHDAYS

● Malayalam cinema director, writer, and producer **Adoor Gopalakrishnan** (right) turned 72 on 3 July.



● The 43rd President of the United States of America, **George W Bush**, turned 67 on 6 July.



● The 14th longest-serving **Dalai Lama**, Tenzin Gyatso, turned 78 on 6 July.

● Hollywood actor, writer and filmmaker **Tom Hanks** (left), turns 57 on 9 July.



● British business tycoon **Richard Branson** (right), founder and chairman of Virgin Group, turns 63 on 18 July.

● Veteran Indian film and stage actor **Naseeruddin Shah** turns 63 on 20 July.

MILESTONES

● 104 year-old **Hari Singh** from Noida became the world's oldest heart patient to go through a successful angioplasty operation on 18 May.

● **Yuichiro Miura** (below), an 80 year-old from Japan, became the oldest man to climb Mount Everest on 23 May. Despite four previous heart surgeries, this was his third attempt, the last two being at ages 70 and 75.



● Violinist **N Rajam** was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship, the highest honour in the field of performing arts, on 28 May by the Sangeet Natak Akademi in recognition of her contribution to Hindustani classical music.

IN PASSING

● **Ray Manzarek**, founder and keyboardist of 1970s American rock band *The Doors*, succumbed to bile duct cancer on 20 May. He was 74.



● A leader of the Indian women's rights movement post-Independence, **Vina Mazumdar** (right) died at the age of 86 on 20 May.



● Renowned for over six decades, Tamil film industry playback singer **T M Sounderarajan** (left) passed away on 25 May at 91.

● Scottish writer **Iain Banks** (below) died of gallbladder cancer on 9 June. He was 59.



● Prominent Islamic author and scholar **Asghar Ali Engineer** passed away on 14 May at 74 after a prolonged illness.

OVERHEARD



"Growing old has become a subject with sexist undertones because men aren't being subjected to the same pressures. It's reductive when a woman's life becomes, 'Talk to me about your kids and how you feel about plastic surgery.' I just think that it's boring!"

—Actor **Julianne Moore**, 52, to *DuJour* magazine

HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY?

THIS IS THE PLACE TO DO IT. REACH OUT TO FELLOW READERS WITH INTERESTING ANECDOTES, INSPIRING STORIES AND HEARTWARMING MOMENTS FROM YOUR LIFE. WRITE IN WITH FULL CONTACT DETAILS, AND MAKE THIS SPACE YOUR OWN.

SOAP OPERA

Twenty years ago, if anyone told me I would be making soaps at home and selling them, I would have laughed out loud. Back then, I was so immersed in looking after my family that I had no time to indulge myself.

Although I was born in Navsari, Gujarat, I was brought up in the UK and did my basic education there. Then, in 1977, my husband and I came back to India and settled in Pune. While he set up a manufacturing unit, I set about learning as much as I could from various sources. Learning came naturally to me. So, from Reiki, aerobics and yoga to making candles and paper, I had an inherent curiosity and interest in all things new.

After my husband's sudden death, my varied interests kept me balanced and sane. Last year, my daughter-in-law Priyanka gifted me a couple of lemon-glycerine handmade

For Bhana, creating exotic handmade soaps is a fulfilling experience

soaps made by a Bengaluru-based lady. I tried them and thought, if a lady in Bengaluru can make them, why can't I?

At that point, I didn't have a clue about making soaps. But chemistry was my favourite subject and, with Google and YouTube as my teachers, I embarked on a slippery slope. I chose the 'cold process' and modified it to suit my requirements of working out of a kitchen. I had to put together essential oils, olive, coconut, etc, some special fragrances and lye, which is a thick, aqueous solution of potassium hydroxide or sodium hydroxide. I was told, 'no lye, no soap.' I was a little disheartened; I had assumed that I would make soap that had no chemicals and I was up against the very first chemical—fortunately the only one!

Mind you, making soap is as complicated a process as it is laborious. But I stood strong against the challenge. Finally, in July last year, I had my first bar of soap ready! I gave some to friends and asked them for feedback. The soap was too soft. My first lesson was that different oils need different lengths of time to cure. A full five months later, when I felt I had a satisfactory product, I sold my first few bars of soap. My first major sale took place in April 2013 at the Street Fest in Kumar Pacific Mall, where I sold soap worth ₹ 30,000 in just five days!

As I said earlier, making soap is a complicated process and my learning curve was not without disasters. I once wanted to make soap with beetroot juice and had visions of a lovely pink soap. I added the lye to the juice and it turned a horrible green! On another occasion, I added hot milk to lye and the soap reeked of burnt milk. I learnt that milk has to be in a semi-frozen state when it is slowly added to lye.

Among my most successful experiments is 'soothing lavender' soap, where I add crushed lavender buds to the mix. Besides soothing lavender, the other popular soaps are honey-oats and goat's milk-lime. I enjoy



Shyamola Khanna

what I am doing and do not want to go commercial as I do not want the stress. I take small orders and fulfil them. This also allows me to experiment with the creative process and keeps me content.

—Urmila Bhana, Pune

COLLECTING MEMORIES

In the 1930s, I had no idea what a hobby was. Being the son of a priest, I used to accompany my father to social and religious functions and I was invariably given a quarter *anna* as *dakshina*. I collected these coins in a brass vessel and occasionally played with them. One day I was surprised to learn that the coin I was playing with was a Victoria brass dating back to 1754! My coin collection now includes rare pieces that relate to the East India Company, Queen Victoria, King George VIII and some embossed with the Indian rulers of princely states.

It was only a matter of time before I graduated to collecting stamps. One of my classmates in school regularly received stamps in butter paper. As he knew I was interested in them, he gave me a few duplicates, which included stamps of German Kaisers, Austria, Italy, Paris and other European countries. My collection gradually turned into a sizeable one.

I left Kerala at the age of 17 and found a job with the Ammunition Factory at Kirkee in 1943. At the end of the War, I shifted to Bombay and was employed with Air India, then a Tata airline. I later moved to Indian Airlines as personnel manager. One day, a neighbour dropped into my office with a friend and asked me if I could help him get a seat on a flight back to Jeddah. It was extremely urgent.

I was unsure as I didn't work for Air India any more but made a phone call and called in a favour anyway. While we were waiting for confirmation, I spotted an envelope in the gentleman's hand and asked him if I could have the stamp on it. He put his hand into his pocket and drew out coins from different countries, in different denominations and gave them all to me. With my help, his seat was confirmed and he was obviously very grateful. A year later, he walked into my office and presented me a bunch of foreign stamps!

Everyone at work knew how happy my collection made me and I would take my albums to the office and proudly show



Gautam Ruparel

From coins to newspaper clippings, Bhatt's list of collectibles is endless

them off. There was a colleague of mine, Leena Survai, who quit and moved to work in Ireland. She dropped into my office a year later and gave me a large brown envelope full of stamps—600 of them. She said she had torn off every stamp on every envelope that landed on her desk and saved them for me!

My love for stamps was an obsession and I opened an account in the GPO in Bombay only so I could receive first-day covers. My passion for collecting extended to just about anything that fascinated me. This included newspaper clippings of R K Laxman's iconic 'You Said It' and photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, Vijayalaxmi Pandit, Dr S Radhakrishnan, V V Giri, etc.

In 1999, I developed an interest in drawing and, a year later, I started painting as well. I am now 87 and in fairly good health, and I am still sketching and painting. With so many hobbies, can there ever be a dull moment? My mind is still as sharp as a needle. My daughter, who lives in the US and preserves my stamp collection, was recently taken by surprise when I asked her to send me a copy of a page from one of my albums; there was a particular stamp I wanted to look at again. I told her she would find it on a certain page and in a certain column. She couldn't believe that I could recall the details so well. Speaking of memory, my collections have so many memories wrapped in them that they keep me entertained in my spare time. Yes, sometimes, it's a good feeling to be lost in time.

—A S Bhatt, Mumbai

Nature nurture

P K MOHANTY, 65, CUTTACK



Iretired as chairman of Mormugaon Port Trust. I enjoyed an illustrious career and held top positions in my working years. After retirement, though, I decided to completely change my line of work and live amid nature.

I completed my post-graduation in economics from Utkal University in Odisha, and worked for the Ford

Foundation, first in Odisha and later in Delhi. In 1971, I came back to Odisha and joined as assistant traffic manager in Paradeep Port. After clearing the UPSC exam, I became a traffic manager in Mangalore in 1979. By 1986, I was director in the Indian Ports Association, Delhi, an apex body of all the 12 ports in India. In 2001, I was posted as chairman of Mormugaon Port Trust in Goa and

this was the year the Government of India started special initiatives for growing medicinal plants. My wife Gitanjali is a keen gardener; her hobby has brought her great rewards and prizes. Wherever we went, she took great interest in gardening. She also won the best prize for orchids in Goa. My transferable job took us to seven states and this exposure helped her gain tremendous knowledge about various



biodiversities. Her love and passion for gardening was transferred to me and I started appreciating nature.

With retirement looming ahead, we decided to set up a herbal garden in Odisha—the idea was actually my wife's. (Our two daughters are married and live in Bengaluru.) Gitanjali Herbal Garden in Cuttack was started in 2001; spread across 35 acre, it cur-

rently employs 20 workers. By 2004, we were growing a large number of commercial plants.

In our years as a student, what we learn does not necessarily help us in our profession but becomes a foundation for the spirit. Farming is one such experience for me; it's my tribute to mother earth. Initially the garden was managed by my wife; I used to spend my time as a consultant, reader and writer. But in 2007, our toddler granddaughter came to stay with us. My wife was busy taking care of her and handed over the farm work lock, stock and barrel to me.

It was not easy as I was struggling from retinal degeneration, which even after treatment led to blindness. But the map of the garden is inked in my mind and I can tell where the trees are and how much fruit they bear. The herbal garden has been profitable and we grow plants like amla, *aswagandha*, aloe vera, lemon grass, *nageswar* and *champa* flowers, among 200 different varieties of plants that are in high demand. We have a full set-up with our own tractor, tiller, drip irrigation system, generators, water pumps, among others.

However, we often face a critical lack of manpower. The second problem is theft. We need to guard cashew and mango trees when in full bloom or the fruits get stolen. The third problem is lack of avenues to sell our produce. The middlemen promise 20 per cent of market price but often do not pay the money. Mother earth is doing her part but the government seriously needs to change its policies or agriculture will become a thing of the past.

All said and done, though, the pleasure of being amid nature is bigger than the economic benefits derived from the garden. A small deer comes and visits our farm all by itself. What's more, the sunrise there is like heaven on earth.

—As told to Ruby Nanda

ART OF THE MATTER

Experts answer your queries and concerns on jobs after retirement

I am a retired schoolteacher with a keen interest in art and craft. Since my 20s, I have been pursuing papier-mâché. Now I am thinking of making it a full-time occupation. Should I approach a retailer or set up my own store?

You can set up your own store but then the burden of advertising, marketing and selling will be your own. You could convert a part of your house into a boutique or sell products online. Use social marketing tools such as Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest to spread the word. For online stores, though, you will also need to register a domain name, take eye-catching high resolution photographs of your products with detailed descriptions, sign up for a secure payment gateway host, and work out delivery systems. The plus point of an online store is that your target customer would not be restricted to your city.

Selling through a retailer is much simpler. Identify stores and boutiques where you think your products will sell well. If they are open to artist contributions, set up appointments with them and work out a deal. Usually, retail stores work in two ways. They will buy your products wholesale and pay you right away or take them on a consignment basis and pay you only after your item is sold. Try to participate in handicraft expositions or fundraising events to find retailers, market your craft work and build your own network.

—Naina Parmar is the owner of Penchant, a jewellery boutique in Pune



Love your heart: A diet that is high on health, and taste

I am 61 years old and slightly overweight. I underwent a heart bypass last year and was advised to exercise and improve my diet. Please suggest a heart-friendly plan for me.

Good eating habits and regular exercise keep the heart healthy. If you have not exercised before, begin at a level that suits your current fitness condition and progress gradually. Cardiovascular or aerobic exercises, such as walking, swimming, cycling, are excellent for your heart and boost the circulatory system. The recommended duration is between 30 and 60 minutes of continuous activity five to seven days a week. Ask your physician for specific exercise guidelines based on your medical history and current fitness status.

A heart-healthy diet is one which is low on fat, moderate in portions, high on fibre and high on nutrition. Contrary to popular opinion, it can also be high on taste! No matter which eating plan you follow, the following guidelines are recommended:

- Your total fat intake should be less than 30 per cent of the total calories consumed every day.
- Polyunsaturated fatty acid intake should be no more than 10 per cent of total daily calorific consumption.
- Saturated fatty acid intake should be less than 7 per cent of total calories daily.
- Monounsaturated fatty acids make up the rest of total fat intake, about 10-15 per cent of total calories consumed every day.

- Cholesterol intake should be no more than 300 mg per day.
- Sodium intake should be no more than 2,500 mg per day.

● Everything in moderation, even alcohol. No matter how many reports you read about wine being healthy for your heart, stick to no more than a glass or two.

● Live life stress-free. Stress creates tension; your breathing becomes shallow and this can lead to headaches and extreme fatigue. Adopt one or more ways of de-stressing: yoga, meditation, deep breathing exercises, stretching exercises, massages and restful sleep.

● Beware of chemicals in your food like caffeine, MSG and other food additives.

Here are some foods that you could include in your diet plan:

- Celery helps lower blood pressure.
- Garlic is beneficial for the heart.
- Tomatoes are high in gamma-amino butyric acid (GABA), a compound that lowers blood pressure.
- Saffron contains crocetin that helps lower blood pressure (BP).
- Fish is packed with Omega-3 fatty acids, which lower risk of heart disease and stroke. Try salmon, tuna and trout for variety.
- Low-fat milk and milk products are calcium-rich and don't contain as much saturated fat as their regular counterparts.
- Sprouts are packed with nutrients, especially proteins.
- Whole grains are nutritious and come with the added advantage of being high on fibre.
- Fresh fruits and vegetables are high in fibre and vital nutrients.

In addition to this, make sure your diet packs in essential vitamins and minerals:





READERS ASK

I need to lose 7 kg of weight. I lead an active life and walk for an hour every day. My grandchildren keep me on my toes in the evenings and I need energy to cope with their needs. Could you suggest a diet plan that would help me lose weight and keep fit?

You can increase your energy levels and lose weight by eating regular, low-fat healthy meals.

Here's a suggested diet plan:

Start your day with a glass of warm water, a cup of herbal tea or regular tea (made with skimmed milk), oats porridge and a papaya slice for breakfast.

Your mid-morning snack could be five walnuts and a wholegrain toast (one slice of bread) with vegetables or an omelette made of two egg whites.

For lunch, have two chapattis (made from *jowar* or wheat) with one cup of any vegetable, a green salad with sprouts, a cup of *moong dal* and a bowl of yoghurt or a glass of buttermilk.

Have a cup of regular tea (made with skimmed milk), herbal tea, coconut water or vegetable juice (choose from bottle gourd, tomato, spinach, celery and carrot) in the afternoon.

For your evening snack, have a cup of roasted *kurmura*, two oil-free *khakra* or three to four multi-grain biscuits (without cream).

Dinner can be similar to lunch, or you could have two chapattis (made from *jowar* or wheat), fish or chicken (150 gm), one cup vegetable and some mixed vegetable salad.

Experiment with interesting herbs and flavours to make your food tasty and light. Bon appétit!

A heart-healthy diet is one which is low on fat, moderate in portions, high on fibre and high on nutrition. Contrary to popular opinion, it can also be high on taste

- Calcium is found in milk (low-fat of course), fresh cottage cheese, yoghurt, broccoli, cabbage, soybean and salmon.
- Potassium is found in coconut water, tomatoes, bananas, beetroots, avocados and oranges.
- Magnesium is found in spinach, almonds, sunflower seeds and barley.
- Vitamin C is found in red cabbage, bell peppers, citrus fruits, kiwis and strawberries.

Here's a sample diet plan that you could follow:

- Begin your day with a cup of green tea rich in antioxidants, with one fibre biscuit and five to six almonds for a healthy start.
- For breakfast, include complex carbohydrate cereals like wheat flakes, cornflakes, oat flakes with milk and one fruit.
- In the mid-morning, a light glass of *lassi* with ginger flakes and coriander can be a wonderful option.
- Lunch should be wholesome with two chapattis (made from whole wheat flour $\frac{1}{2}$ + *channa* flour $\frac{1}{4}$ + *jowar* flour $\frac{1}{4}$), a cup of *dal*, a cup of vegetables and a quarter plate of salad.
- Evening tea could be accompanied with $\frac{1}{2}$ bowl of roasted *chana* or half a vegetable sandwich.

- Dinner is the last meal of the day. Relish some healthy soup followed by two chapattis, a cup of vegetables and a cup of *raita*.

Meal tips

When cooking, choose low-fat preparation methods such as baking, broiling, grilling and boiling rather than frying or sautéing. Choose lean cuts of meat and trim any visible fat from meats before cooking them. These methods not only help control calorie content but retain important nutrients.

Namita Jain is a wellness specialist and celebrity nutritionist at Diet Mantra and has written bestsellers on diet and fitness. Visit www.dietmantra.in. If you have any questions for Namita Jain, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



Memory loss: Is it ageing or dementia?

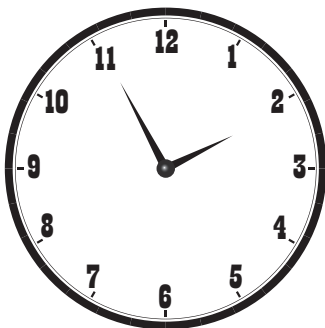
Not being able to find your spectacles is a classic example of simple memory loss that could be related to ageing. Other examples of such lapses include difficulty in remembering names of familiar (or even close) persons; forgetting important dates like birthdays and anniversaries; and difficulty in keeping count of the money you have, and hence counting it several times. Though these are mostly related to ageing, they may also be a manifestation of an underlying disease like dementia. Dementia should not be confused with normal or accelerated ageing; it is a degenerative ailment of the brain. All those suffering from loss of memory cannot be said to be suffering from dementia, but those with this condition will certainly exhibit memory loss. Dementia can be diagnosed only when memory loss is coupled with aphasia, apraxia and amnesia:

- **Apraxia:** Forgetting simple, everyday activities that you've been doing as a routine for decades together. For instance, not knowing what to do with a toothbrush after applying toothpaste on it.

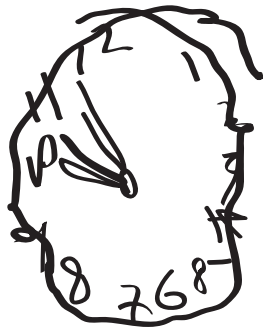
- **Aphasia:** Difficulty in speaking clearly. It also means struggling to use the right word in the right place. For instance, instead of saying Agra, you say, "the place where Taj Mahal is".

Dementia should not be confused with normal ageing; it is a degenerative ailment of the brain. Dementia can be diagnosed only when memory loss is coupled with aphasia, apraxia and amnesia

CLOCK DRAWING TASK



NORMAL SILVER



SILVER WITH DEMENTIA

- **Amnesia:** Inability to recall the names and faces of familiar objects or people.

Symptoms of dementia

Older adults over 70 to 75 years of age have a greater chance of developing dementia. Women are comparatively more affected than men. The earliest signs include gradual loss of memory impairing the power to concentrate. There is also loss of awareness of time and place and what one is doing. It also hinders the ability to learn new activities as well as analyse things.

The condition mainly affects recent memory; so patients forget specific things that happened on a particular day. Yet they are able to retain past memory. One must, however, remember that ageing does not necessarily mean dementia. There are people who celebrate their 100th birthday and still remember the flavour of the cake they cut that day.

Memory loss owing to old age

This is caused owing to the slowing down of neural processes in the brain. The person can recognise this problem early and seek medical advice. A recommended evaluation is the mental health test or Mini Mental Status Examination (MMSE); with simple memory loss, the results will be good. The MRI and SPECT scans of the brain should be without abnormalities.

Memory loss owing to dementia

This is caused by chemical changes in the brain and death of brain cells. Patients will not be able to recognise their own problem; they will need to be referred to a doctor by a family member or friend. They will hold their own views on everything—for instance, whether an object is a pen or a knife—and will be reluctant to correct their mistake. Their MMSE test will show deterioration and MRI and SPECT brain scans will show pathological changes in the patient.

Dementia: causes and types

- **Alzheimer's disease:** The exact contributory reasons are yet to be established. Genetics/heredity and environment could be possible causes. Also, anyone could be afflicted with the disease. For instance, former US president Ronald Reagan and celebrated boxer Mohammed Ali suffered from it.

- **Vascular dementia:** It often develops in sudden steps owing to the blood supply being cut off in parts of the brain by a series of small strokes. Women are affected more than men by this.

- **Mixed dementia:** A combination of the above mentioned two types.

In families where heredity is the risk factor, the disease may occur at a relatively younger age, between 50 and 60. Dementia may also be caused because of diseases such as hypertension, hypothyroidism, alcoholism, tumours, the use of drugs like sedatives, psychoactive drugs, sedative anti-hypertensives and beta-blockers, and deficiency of Vitamin B12 and folic acid.

Memory assessment

- **MMSE test:** This analyses several aspects such as thinking power, memory and language.

- **Clock drawing task:** This is a useful screening tool to differentiate normal elderly from individuals with cognitive impairment, and in particular those with Alzheimer's disease (illustration on the facing page).

- **PET scan and SPECT scan:** These are taken only when it is essential, when Alzheimer's disease is suspected. Thus, the presence of dementia can be diagnosed with a certainty of up to 80 per cent.

Is dementia curable?

Attempts are still being made to find medication to cure dementia. However, early detection of the ailment and timely treatment will certainly reduce the adverse effects of the disease. Treating underlying causes, such as mental depression, will help reduce memory impairment.

Giving up alcohol consumption is also helpful in regaining memory. Further, restrained and judicious intake of medicines for sleep, depression and other disorders would prove beneficial. And if thyroid condition is a cause, it can be treated by medication.

Medicines for dementia

Though the disease is not fully curable, some neuro-protective options are recommended to reduce the severity of the disease. These include antioxidants vitamins E and C; vitamins B6 and B12 and folic acid; and statins to reduce and control blood cholesterol. Herbs like ginkgobiloba may be helpful in some cases. Also, while tablets such as Donepezil, Rivastigmine and Galantamine are helpful in treating memory impairment at early stages, they may have some side-effects.



Tips to improve memory

- As the saying goes, 'Use it or lose it.' It is possible to gradually reduce cognitive impairment and improve memory by constantly stimulating the cells in the brain.

- When problems like poor eyesight and hearing impairment are rectified, mental health is known to improve.

- Any form of physical exercise on a daily basis will enhance blood supply to the brain and improve memory.

- Gardening, attending lectures and taking part in spiritual activities are some pleasant ways to relax both body and mind.

- Meditation will go a long way in the nurturing of mental health. The late neurosurgeon Dr B Ramamurthi believed that sleeping or passive brain cells could be activated through meditation.

- Consume foods that nourish the mind and memory, such as egg yolks, tuna, green tea, coffee, sweet potatoes, onions, kidney beans, strawberries, apples and raisins.

Padmashri Dr V S Natarajan, a specialist in the field of geriatric medicine, runs Memory Clinic, a service for silvers in Chennai. If you have a question for him, write to contact.mag@harmonyindia.org



YOGA RX BY SHAMEEM AKTHAR

Ab advantage: Work your way to a flatter stomach and healthier body

Having a flatter abdomen is not just a cosmetic ideal. Medical science has acknowledged that a heavy fat layer around the stomach is an important indicator of potential heart problems. It is also an indicator of stress as there is more fat deposited around the abdomen when the adrenal (stress) glands go on an overdrive. Having a toned stomach also helps the digestive and reproductive systems stay fit, helping us maintain superb health as well as emotional well-being.

In yoga, the navel is called the crown jewel centre and is the most important transition point between our emotional and lower selves, or animal self to a spiritual and higher self. It is seen as an ego centre where our sense of worth, when not in place, may be compensated severely by either anger or anxiety.

Once fat begins to deposit in the abdominal area, it would appear almost impossible to remove it. But we can at least hope to reduce the width and girth of this region with yoga. For fat loss at the stomach, though, the practice has to be very intense, right from the start. You should be able

In yoga, the navel is called the crown jewel centre and is the most important transition point between our emotional and lower selves, or animal self to a spiritual and higher self

to extend the time in the final pose and maintain tone by increasing repetitions for each *asana*, doing the pose several times at one go.

Some great poses that help tone the stomach are double leg raises (*dwipada suptapadasana*) in all their variations; pelvic tilt (*kandarasana*), the locust pose (*salabhasana*); wheel (*chakrasana*); bow (*dhanurasana*), especially in its dynamic version called *drutadhanurasana*; swaying palm tree pose (*trikaya tadasana*); and the side-twist head to knee pose (*parivrittijanushirsana*); among others.

YOGIC MOVES



Double leg infinity pose (*dwipada anantasana*)

Lie on your left side and support your head with your left hand. Let the right leg be placed on top of the left, as shown. If new to yoga, start with lifting just the top leg and dropping it several times. Inhale when you lift and exhale when you drop it. Keep both legs straight. Later, with practice, you may raise both legs up a few inches off the ground. Try to keep the body straight and avoid tilting at

the hips or upper back. After doing the pose dynamically in the initial stages of your practice, you may hold it for a longer duration in the final round, for five to ten seconds. Switch sides. Avoid if you suffer from lower back pain.

Benefits: This pose builds tone of the abdomen, hips and legs. It also builds mental stamina and promotes blood circulation.

Model: Shriram P Achrekar,
Harmony Interactive Centre

Photographer: Hareesh Patel

Shameem Akthar is a Mumbai-based yoga acharya. If you have any queries for her, mail us or email at contact.mag@harmonyindia.org. (Please consult your physician before following the advice given here)

Understand real benefits of Green Coffee Bean

Low in Chlorogenic Acids

(when the coffee beans are roasted at a high temperature, the chlorogenic acids is almost destroyed)

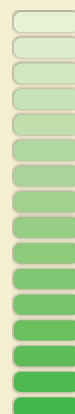
Low



Roasted Coffee Bean

High in Chlorogenic Acids

High



Green Coffee Bean

Health Benefits of Chlorogenic Acids

- Preserve natural antioxidants in the body.
- Decrease the production of free radicals
(toxic molecules that damage every area of our body)
- Neutralize Carcinogenic compound.
- Burns both sugar and fat & slows the release of sugar into blood stream.

NOW, with all benefits of Chlorogenic Acids

GRECOBE

Green coffee bean Extract (Decaffeinated NMT2%)

An ultimate antioxidant

For enquiries or order, please contact:

09915002390, 07814122220, 07814422220

or email: fenfuro@fenfuro.com

www.fenfuro.com



THE GREAT GRANNY DIARIES BY PRATIBHA JAIN SMT VEDULA SATYAVATI, HYDERABAD

An engaging series about the wisdom of love, nurturing and culinary bonding across generations

At 93, her mind is razor sharp, there is not much that misses her eye, and her words flow effortlessly. She enjoys a good conversation and passionately talks about traditional recipes, while instructing her cook about the next meal. Her instructions are clear and her assessments thorough. When I first met Smt Vedula Satyavati, she seemed amused by my questions about her life and interests, but once she realised I was serious, the dialogue began in earnest. She spoke in Hyderabad Hindi as I do not know her mother tongue Telugu. Recipes and anecdotes were interwoven in the

dialogue, leaving me speechless at her ability to recollect them.

A mother of six, grandmother of nine, and great-grandmother of 10, she takes keen interest in the well-being and activities of her entire family, expressing pride at their achievements. As our conversation progressed, her children and grandchildren were drawn to where we sat. She paused every now and then to ask them to show me a particular thing, like a photo frame or the spinning wheel so I could get an authentic feel of her earlier life.

Tell me about your childhood, and can I call you *Ammamma*?

Yes, *Ammamma* means maternal grandmother. I was born in Kakaraparru village in the west Godavari district and grew up in a large family. I was married at the age of seven to Shri Vedula Narasimha Murti. He was 14 at the time.

Really! At seven?

Yes, but I continued to stay in my parents' house and went to his house when I turned 12.



Photographs by Anand K Soma

“Patriotism was an integral part of our lives then. Later, I taught my children to spin khadi. It was a compulsory practice on national holidays”

Even then, you must have been so young....

Yes, many of my siblings and cousins married at a tender age. Later, the government introduced the Sarda Act to abolish child marriage. After that, girls in our families were not married before their *rajaswala*, which means the onset of the menstrual cycle. [This Act, also known as the Child Marriage Restraint Act 1929, fixed the age of marriage for girls at 14 and boys at 18. It was one of the major social reforms at that time.]

At that age, did you know how to cook and other household chores?

We learnt by watching elders. No one wrote down recipes, we saw our elders cooking and preserved the knowledge in our memory. I still remember how I used to go and play in my aunt's house and see her cook. In fact, I was more fascinated by her cooking than the games we were playing. She was an expert at making Mysore *pakku*, a sweet dish. I would ask her countless questions and she would patiently answer them. Later, when I returned home, I imitated her by cooking in my toy vessels.

Do you still remember how you adjusted in a new household at the tender age of 12?

Actually my mother-in-law was my father's sister. She was a very affectionate and caring woman. Hence I found no difficulty in my new home.

When did you move to Hyderabad?

When I was 18, my husband was appointed as a lecturer in Visakhapat-

nam where we lived for almost a decade. And then we moved to Bombay. We also lived in Nigeria, Thailand and Indonesia, and have been living in Hyderabad since 1977. He passed away more than a decade ago.

A special childhood memory?

I remember how all of us used to spin khadi in those days. I also remember that my parents entertained a lot of visitors, many of whom were great political personalities. A very special moment was when I met Gandhiji in Wardha in 1941.

I can see the spinning wheel in that corner; who spins now? Did you wear khadi saris?

Yes, at that time we wore khadi more than anything else. Patriotism was an integral part of our lives then. Later, I taught my children to spin khadi. It was a compulsory practice on national holidays. I also taught other children in the village to do so. Now my granddaughter Annapurna works with handloom weavers. Everything was different back then; it was another way of life.

What's your opinion about the changing times?

Things change and what we like also changes. Back then, we liked that lifestyle. The present way of life has its own appeal. Earlier, young girls wore frocks and later *pavade-dawani* [long skirt with half-sari]. But now there is makeup, hairstyles and so much to choose from. Even relationships were different then. Earlier, children listened to elders. But now they think for themselves and do as they please.

Do you correct the younger generation if they behave or dress inappropriately?

No, I think it is better to accept the change and not say anything. They know how to think for themselves.

FROM SMT VEDULA SATYAVATI'S KITCHEN

Minapa Rotti

Chapattis are normally made from dough but the Andhra *minapa rotti* is a pancake prepared from batter. Also known as *dibba rotti*, which means fat bread, this dish is cooked on a low flame in a special brass vessel known as a *mookudu*. The soft centre of this dish combines well with the crisp exterior. Patience is the first ingredient to prepare this seemingly simple tiffin, a weekend favourite in the family. Perhaps this dish gets its name from the predominance of *minapappu* or black gram. The proportion of gram and rice varies from one family to another, with many preferring even four measures of rice to a measure of gram, but Smt Satyavati is quite firm that for a measure of black gram, the ideal measure of rice *rava* should not be more than 1%.

Ingredients:

- Split black gram (husked): 1 cup
- Broken rice (also known as rice *rava*, size of sugar crystals): 1¾ cups
- Cumin seeds: 1 tsp
- Salt: to taste
- Oil: for shallow frying

Method

To prepare the batter: Wash and soak the gram and broken rice separately, each in three cups of water for three to four hours. Strain the gram, and grind it well, adding water little by little until it becomes soft and fluffy. Strain the broken rice and mix



thoroughly with the gram batter using a ladle. Use some of the strained water if needed. Add salt and cumin seeds and set aside. The batter should be of thick, pouring consistency like a cake batter.

As Smt Satyavati explained, if it is too thick, the *rotti* will become tough rather than crisp when cooked. If it is too thin, it will not cook fully in the centre. The batter can be used immediately or within three hours. It can also be refrigerated and used within a couple of days. But care should be taken that it remains unfermented.

Making the *rotti*: Heat the *mookudu*. (The measure here is for a *mookudu* of about 10 inches in diameter). Add a tablespoon of oil in the centre of the vessel. Lower the flame and pour the batter in the centre, allowing it to extend evenly to 1 cm thickness to the sides of the *mookudu*. The ladle

can be used gently to spread the batter. Drizzle a tablespoon of oil on the sides and the top of the *rotti*. Smear the inner side of a lid that will fit on the *mookudu* with oil and place it on the vessel. Now, exercise patience and allow the *rotti* to cook until it becomes crisp and golden on the underside. This may take about 8-10 minutes. Adjust the heat and the vessel to prevent the bottom side of the *rotti* from burning.

Deftly, use a flat ladle to flip it over. Drizzle a tablespoon of oil on the sides and replace the lid. Once again, allow it to become crisp and golden on the underside. Flip on to a plate and cut into large triangles. Wipe the *mookudu* with a cloth and pour the next *rotti*, following the same procedure.

Serve hot with *kobbarakai pachchadi* or any pickle/chutney of your choice.

Tips: If you do not have a *mookudu*, you can use a non-stick pan. Make smaller *rotti* so they can be flipped easily. Traditionally, the batter was poured to 1-inch thickness and a few pieces of burning coal were placed on top of the lid, thus allowing the *rotti* to cook on top and at the bottom like in an oven. A small banana leaf can be rolled and placed in the centre of the *rotti* so it forms a depression, ensuring that it does not remain uncooked in the centre.

Pratibha Jain, an author and translator from Chennai, is the co-author of two award-winning books Cooking at Home with Pedatha and Sukham Ayu. Her area of specialisation is documenting Indian traditions through research, translation and writing

rich crème hair colour that will make you go “Oh my God!”

Every Godrej Expert Rich Crème hair colour pack comes with **premeasured sachets**, all you have to do is mix and apply. Rich Crème also has **Aloe Protein** that nourishes your hair, making it soft & shiny. And **no Ammonia**[#] means it's absolutely safe.[#] All that at a price that'll make you go “Oh my God!”.

₹30*



premeasured sachets



with aloe protein
for soft and shiny hair



natural black black brown dark brown natural brown burgundy

long lasting shades

*20g+20ml



Chennai Pix

Write on!

P A Seshan is a name that was both loved and feared in the world of finance. The 'watchdog' of financial journalism looks back at his glorious past with **Vinita Nayar**

With pen names like 'Leo' and 'Watchdog', one had better watch out! But P A Seshan is not one bit intimidating. Seated in an antique planter's chair in his gracious home on a quiet, leafy street in Chennai, our centenarian is calm and dignified. "I am fully alert and there is no sign of senility," he says with a smile. "I am completing 100 years of age with all my faculties intact."

There's even more to be proud of. Up until his retirement in 1994, Seshan was a 'decorated' financial journalist, sought after by industrialists, media magnates, senior banking and stock market officials—thanks to his 'God-given' gift for finance.

And he was as loved as he was revered. Exactly a year ago, in the run-up to his 100th birthday on 7 July, Seshan was felicitated by *The Hindu* in Chennai; he enjoyed a 41-year association with the newspaper. "My father is no less active today. Would you believe it, he still calls up brokers daily to buy and sell stocks," says his son P S Ananthanarayan, gazing fondly at his dad.

Seshan's prodigious achievements are especially sweet because they didn't come easily. Smack in the middle of his career, he was diagnosed with retinitis pigmentosa. In short, his eyesight began to fail. Nevertheless, he took this in his stride. "I did not react badly because I was pre-warned by eminent doctors that there would be gradual deterioration in my vision. I was, of course, emotionally upset but only temporarily." Encouragement from his seniors at work helped a lot as did hiring a secretary to be his

'eyes.' "I had no major handicap on this score," he says, adding that his phenomenal memory compensated in no small measure for his constantly deteriorating vision.

When Seshan was only a boy, growing up in small towns in Tamil Nadu, there was no inkling of the greatness that lay in store. His father was a legal officer and he came from a middle-class family. In 1933, at the age of 20, Seshan graduated from college with

In 1957, Seshan adopted the pen name 'Leo' and began a daily column called 'Leo's News & Notes,' published in *The Hindu Business Line* for 37 years

a degree in economics and politics. Then, he got married and left for Calcutta, where he landed a job as an assistant editor with *Indian Finance*, a financial daily. "My uncle was the editor of the paper and it was easy finding a job there," says Seshan.

Young and eager, the lad learnt the ropes quickly, and it wasn't long before he started writing a regular column under the pen name 'Watchdog.' "The column drew instant attention and built my reputation within and outside the journalistic community," recalls Seshan. "My column was so popular in the mid-1940s that it gave me easy access to the movers and shakers of finance, such as Sir Edward Venthall, chairman of Bird

Heilgers Group; Sir John Burber of Jardine Skinner Group; Sir Humphry Cumberbatch, chairman of Andrew Yule Group; and Sir Lord Inchcape of McKinnon McKenzie."

After 16 glorious years with *Indian Finance*, it was time to part ways as the publication ran into financial trouble before it finally shut down in 1957. But with his formidable reputation, finding work was a breeze. Seshan edited many financial trade journals, contributed columns and articles to newspapers and wrote editorials for them. He was also snapped up as city editor of *Eastern Express*, a newspaper that was then a part of the Indian Express Group.

After that stint, he took up the position of director of research with the Employers' Association, an affiliate of the Indian Chamber of Commerce, Calcutta. "I did not relish the change from financial journalism to industrial research and I decided to revert to journalism," he reminisces. Back on the market, Seshan was instantly wooed by the biggest and best in the business. "I had attractive offers from newspapers like *The Times of India* and *Hindustan Times* and even from the Research Foundation of FICCI [Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry]. But I chose to join *The Hindu*."

Seshan moved from Calcutta to Madras and joined the paper as an assistant editor in 1957. That's when he adopted the pen name 'Leo' and began a daily column called 'Leo's News & Notes,' published in *The Hindu Business Line* for 37 years. "I chose the name 'Leo' after my *rashi* [star] *simham*, which means lion," he explains.

Seshan's coverage of corporate news and corporate performances attracted many new readers and investors, which in turn brought the newspaper corporate advertising. Such was his draw as a journalist. "Leo's Notes brought me name and fame," he remarks with pride. "It broadened my contacts with industrialists, bankers and people in stock-market circles and helped me gain access to privileged information."

Another notable achievement was his contribution to a book, *New Dimensions of Industrial Growth*, commissioned by the United Nations Industrial Organisation in 1991. "I wrote a major portion of the book, whose thrust was industrial development in India since Independence and the progress of the Five-Year Plans," says Seshan. "My contribution was acknowledged in the preface of the book."

Not surprisingly, the celebrated journalist has received numerous awards and has been felicitated by industrialists, chief executives of financial institutions and stock-exchange specialists alike. "My most cherished award was given by the Southern India Chamber of Commerce and I received it at the hands of R Venkataraman, former President of India," he shares.

When he retired in 1994, he made the transition after more than 60 years in mainstream journalism quite easily. "My daily routine changed but my work did not," shrugs Seshan, who continued as an editorial consultant with *The Hindu Business Line* till 1998.

Seshan is grateful that his health has stood him in good stead despite his punishing routine. "On most days, I used to work more than 10 hours a day. I had to write editorials every week; I had to do a column daily; and occasionally special articles. Then, there was the regular *Survey of Indian Industry*. Even now, I find it hard to believe I am almost a hundred!"



The Hindu Images

Seshan being felicitated by *The Hindu* in Chennai on his 99th birthday last year

"Leo's Notes broadened my contacts with industrialists and people in stock-market circles and helped me gain access to privileged information"

Pure vegetarian food and clean habits have contributed to his longevity. "You will be surprised to learn that in my younger days, I used to work out regularly on parallel bars and also played hockey, badminton and tennis," he says with a chuckle. A special diet? "Typical South Indian good food," comes the reply.

A stickler for discipline, Seshan wakes up at 6.30 am every day and, exactly 15 minutes later, switches on the radio. He makes sure he catches the regional news and every subsequent news bulletin throughout the day! His son remarks, "He's making up for what he is not able to read in the newspaper." Seshan eagerly looks forward to his evenings because that's when his secretary P G Ganesan arrives. Ganesan is

virtually his right hand and types everything his employer needs to jot down. "He has had a series of secretaries and they were all devoted to him," says Ananthanarayan. "The doyens of industry in Chennai still look up to him and consult him whenever they need to."

But Seshan is a tough taskmaster. "He checks and double-checks every statistic I give him with another source," says Ganesan, who regards his employer with nothing less than reverence. "He is never satisfied with the data I collect for him and always asks for more. Of course, my first draft is never good enough! Sometimes, I am on tenterhooks, wanting to leave for home as the family is waiting to eat dinner. But I have to wait till he is fully satisfied with my work."

He may be a 'Leo' on the work front but this toughie also has a gentle side that he reveals almost reluctantly. Seshan's wife Rukmani passed away in April 2008 and his daughter in November 2012, losses he feels very deeply. His daughter-in-law is at his side though, and she clearly dotes on him. "We have been staying together in a joint family for 50 years," she says. "He is like a father to me. He is so affectionate and so kind." ❀

RELIANCE

Life Insurance

**For a Life Cover of ₹ 1 crore
my premium is only ₹ 8400 p.a.***

Premium that is easy on your pocket!

Presenting...

Reliance Life Insurance eTerm Plan



Benefits

- ▶ **Instant Cover** at affordable premiums
- ▶ Gives **Special Rates** for female lives
- ▶ **Protects** your family
- ▶ Choose from two **Life Cover Options**
- ▶ **Simple and Easy** online application process
- ▶ **Tax Benefits** u/s 80C & 10(10D), subject to conditions

Apply at www.reliancelife.com



Instant Protection for your family at affordable rates!



▶ Income Tax Benefits under the income tax laws of 1961 are subject to amendments and interpretation. ▶ Kindly consult a tax expert.
▶ Kindly review the offer documents carefully before investing. ▶ *Conditions apply.

Reliance Life Insurance Company Limited (Reg. No 121) Registered Office: H Block, 1st Floor, Dhirubhai Ambani Knowledge City, Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra 400 710, India
Customer Care Number: **1800 300 08181 & 3033 8181** ▶ Email: rlife.customerservice@relianceada.com ▶ Website: www.reliancelife.com

ISO 9001:2008
CERTIFIED COMPANY

For more details on terms and conditions please read sales brochure carefully before concluding a sale.
For internal communication only. Insurance is the subject matter of the solicitation. UIN for Reliance Life Insurance eTerm Plan: 121N087V01

Insure, assure

Priya Desai advocates a comprehensive medicaid policy to safeguard your tomorrows

With time, our health, which may have been an ally all along, begins to play truant. You may eat healthy, shun bad habits and walk the mandatory miles. Nevertheless, age-related medical conditions have a way of creeping up and taking you by surprise when least expected. And when that happens, you either drown or swim. If you are not armed with medical insurance, you might drown under the weight of financial burdens. And, if you have been wise enough to don the lifejacket of medical cover, you might just make it out of the deep water.

As you advance in years, the frequency of ailments also increases proportionately. Another candle on your birthday cake means additional doctor fees, prohibitively expensive medical tests, medication and out-of-reach hospitalisation costs. Therefore, shouldn't investing a part of one's annual income in a medicaid policy be a norm rather than an exception?

Medical policies

The ideal scenario would be to go in for medical insurance before you turn 50. A medicaid policy at that age is simpler to obtain and easier on the pocket. As older people are more predisposed to falling ill, it entails higher medical policy claims. From the point of view of an insurance company, senior citizens are a strain on their business and a liability rather than a profit-making proposition.

Look at Sharmila Nayak's case. She obtained a medicaid policy worth ₹ 500,000 for the first time at the age of 64. Three eye operations, two knee-replacement surgeries and a premium of ₹ 100,000 over a period of six years made her eligible for claims of over



₹ 600,000. This is exactly why senior citizens are cold-shouldered by insurance companies that will otherwise roll out the red carpet for younger and healthier people.

The options

Despite the definite hurdle of age, a large number of companies and banks offer senior citizens medical cover. National Insurance Company, New India Assurance, United India Insurance and Oriental Insurance operate in the public-sector space; while companies such as Max Bupa, Tata AIG, ICICI Lombard, Chola mandalam DBS, AG Health Insurance, Royal Sundaram and Star Allied dominate the private sector. Nationalised banks such as Andhra Bank, Maharashtra Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Indian Bank and Canara Bank have tie-ups with insurance companies. Account holders with these banks can opt for medical insurance for their parents.

Though the premiums are attractive, procedural claim hassles tend to dull the sheen.

The variables

Medicaid policies offered by insurance companies differ on numerous counts, and hence defy strict comparison. Age coverage, premium amounts, ailment coverage and claim amounts vary. In addition, they have varying requirements of pre-insurance medical tests, claim payment records, time taken for payments, payment modes, etc. For instance, National India Assurance Company restricts the insurance entry age to 64 and medical cover to ₹ 150,000 for senior citizens. On the other hand, Bajaj Allianz has a cap on renewal at 75 years; while some other companies extend it to a lifetime. ICICI Lombard has a high loading of 200 per cent, while National India Assurance loads premium in the range of 10 to 200

AT A GLANCE: A SELECT COMPARISON OF MEDICAL INSURANCE POLICIES FOR SILVERS

Company name	National	Bajaj	Star	Max Bupa	ICICI Lombard	Apollo Munich
Product name	Varishtha	Silver	Red Carpet	Heartbeat	Complete	Optima Senior
Minimum entry age of eldest member	61 yrs	46 yrs	60 yrs	No limit	No limit	61 yrs
Maximum entry age of eldest member	80 yrs	70 yrs	69 yrs	No limit	No limit	No limit
Sum insured available	₹ 100,000-Mediclaim; ₹ 200,000-Critical	₹ 100,000 to ₹ 500,000	₹ 100,000 to ₹ 500,000	₹ 100,000 to ₹ 5 million	₹ 100,000 to ₹ 5 million	₹ 200,000, ₹ 300,000, ₹ 500,000
Pre-insurance medical test applicable	YES	YES	NO	YES	YES	YES
Sub-limits on room rent per day	1%	No limit	1%	Room category limit, depending on plan selected	No room rent limit	No room rent limit
Sub-limits on ICU rent	2%	No limit	2%	No limit	No limit	No limit
Waiting period - Illness cover (days)	30	30	30	90	30	30
Waiting period - Accident cover	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero	Zero
Waiting period for specified illnesses	1 yr	1, 4 yrs	1, 2 yrs	2 yrs	2 yrs	2 yrs
Source: Medimanage.com Research Team						
Waiting period for pre-existing illnesses	1 yr	1 yr	After 1 yr at 50 % co-pay	4 yrs	2 and 4 yrs	3 yrs
Co-pay on admissible claim	20% co-pay for covered pre-existing diseases & 10% co-pay for all other claims	Co-pay of 20% for non- network hospitals	30% co-pay for claims other than pre-existing	20% after 65 yrs	No co-pay	15% co-pay 30% if you opt for private room
Sub-limits on treatments	Yes. List available on request	Cataract	60 to 75% of sum insured	No limit	No limit	Co-pay of 30% of specified treatments
Loading on claims	Bonus will reduce by 10%	Loading applicable, but no clear policy on the same	20 to 50%	No loading	Up to 200%	No loading
Renewal ceasing age	Lifetime	75 years	Lifetime	Lifetime	Lifetime	Lifetime
Premium for 65 years - ₹ 200,000	9796*	12,588	9,500	19,981	22,547	11,932

Source: Medimanage.com Research Team

*National Varishtha has a cover of ₹ 100,000 maximum for hospitalisation, and ₹ 200,000 for some specified ailments

per cent in case the claims have been made for two successive years.

Another variable is the waiting period for pre-existing illnesses. Max Bupa's Heartbeat has four years; while National Varishtha has a waiting period of only one year. Most policies have an overriding period of two to three years for diseases that indicate no permanent exclusion. Apollo

Munich's Optima Senior Policy has a permanent exclusion for illnesses such as thyroid and asthma. Insurance companies tend to shun those who suffer from chronic diseases such as diabetes, heart and renal ailments.

Beyond technicalities

With the weave of benefits and the web of limitations being interwoven

into a fabric of confusion, zeroing-in on a company can prove to be a daunting task. Insurance agents are dedicated to specific companies and have set targets. More often than not, buyers will be apprised only of the benefits of a policy rather than being offered a more comparative view of what various companies have on offer. Very few policy holders harbour the inclination, capacity or patience to

study all the policies available on the market. The downsides of a policy are brought to the fore only after a policy holder seeks a claim. (See the previous page for a comparison of some select policies. These can be used as a starting point for basic guidance.)

A study of the table suggests that it is critical to look beyond the glossy brochure and scrutinise the details before opting for a policy. Another way to gather details is to visit a health insurer's official website and peruse the information listed there. Internet reviews and user reviews are a valuable source of information and can help you take a more informed decision. Websites such as www.healthinsuranceindia.org, www.myinsuranceclub.com, www.mediclaimindia.co.in and www.medimanage.com/my-health-insurance.aspx carry useful information as well. Being on guard is the best way to avoid mistakes.

Foresight is better than hindsight

On a long-term basis, buying a health insurance policy is a major investment decision. This makes it even more important for you to invest some effort before you actually commit to settling for a specific medical policy. The questions you should be asking are:

- ☐ Why should I have health insurance cover and what are my expectations?
- ☐ What will my annual financial obligation be?
- ☐ What is the projected escalation over the years vis-à-vis my ability to pay from my future income?
- ☐ Did I scrutinise the fine print thoroughly and compare policy details?
- ☐ Did I go through user reviews and understand the pros and cons of the policy?

☐ Have I factored in personal provision to supplement the policy cover?

Tick these points off too

In addition to the pointers above, there are a few more things that will have to be considered before you sign on the dotted line:

Kind of policy: A range of policies are available, such as individual, floater, critical illness, surgical benefits, etc. Decide which one suits you the best.

Policy coverage: Exclusions, pre-existing diseases, coverage of various diseases and their time schedule are

It is mandatory for senior citizens to delve into the nitty-gritty of mediclaim policies. This will help you pick a better policy with more favourable terms and a maximum claim amount

details you will have to look at. For example, some policies cover cataract only two years after policy purchase.

Terms and conditions: Claim payment may operate on either a cashless or reimbursable option. Time frame for pre and post-hospitalisation expenses, co-payment, room rent, sub-limits and deductibles are details you should be checking on.

Reputation check: There will invariably be delays in settlement, straining financial resources. Check the reputation of an insurance company with reference to claim payment.

Policy rules check: Double check expiry and renewal rules and grace period availability.

Cross-reference: Take a relook at claim loading and no-claim bonus details. Check the claim history of a company via the Internet and by speaking with friends who have some mediclaim knowledge.

Pay attention to details: Be meticulous with documentation while making a claim. This will help avoid delays owing to user mistakes. Insurance companies have a tendency to use this as an excuse for delaying payments.

In conclusion

Illness is an uninvited, unwanted guest who can knock on your door anytime and is often very demanding. It can erode and at times wipe out your life's savings when you need them the most. This makes it mandatory for senior citizens to delve into the nitty-gritty of mediclaim policies. This will help you pick a better policy with more favourable terms and a maximum claim amount.

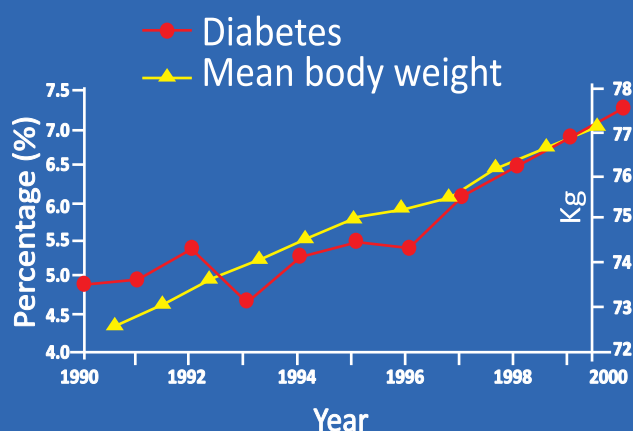
Keep in mind that a health insurance company is not a charitable organisation but a profit-making business. It will always be prompt in collecting premiums but will dilly-dally when it comes to settling claims. Mis-selling is rampant, but is difficult to prove. On 25 May 2009, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA) issued a circular titled "Health Insurance for Senior Citizens". It holds useful information about the rights of senior citizens while buying a mediclaim policy.

Being well-equipped is half the battle won. The half that remains will have to be fought on the actual battlefield, i.e. at the point of claim. The proof of the pudding is in the eating; use your mediclaim policy to test its worth.

The writer is a Mumbai-based economist

Obesity can lead to Diabetes

Diabetes and Obesity: The Continuing Epidemic



Currently india ranks second with **155 million obese citizens, **35 million** are diabetic with millions not knowing that they have this disease*

Join the growing number of FENFURO and FUROSLIM users



AN ANSWER TO GROWING MENACE OF
OBESITY

Manage **Blood Sugar** Level
with

FENFURO™
NATURE + SCIENCE

Novel & Innovative Process US Patent Granted

For more details contact:

09915002390, 7814122220 or Email: fenfuro@fenfuro.com

www.fenfuro.com

Caught in the act

We know her from her classic role in the iconic play *Madhabi*. But perhaps the most challenging role she's played to date is 'being Sohini Sengupta'. In a no-holds-barred interview to **Partha Mukherjee**, the young and talented stage actor discusses love, life and her lifeblood—theatre



(L to R) Rudraprasad, Swatilekha and Sohini Sengupta while staging *Agyatobash*



Photographs by Shilbhadra Datta

With Sohini Sengupta, what you see is what you get. Theatre is her *raison d'être* and despite effortlessly slipping in and out of roles on stage, she holds up no masks. Daughter of two towering personalities of Bengali theatre—Rudraprasad and Swatilekha Sengupta—Sohini learnt to roll with the punches very early. While her parents busied themselves with theatre, she learnt to fend for herself and stand up for what she believed in. And that meant knowing who she was.

Her standout role came three years ago, at the age of 36, when she played the lead in *Madhabi*, a play directed by her mother. *Madhabi* not only lifted her acting prowess to the sublime, the character also represented every woman who has ever felt battered and repressed. Yet *Madhabi*'s indomitable spirit transforms the mythological character from *Madhabi the Captive* into *Madhabi the Triumphant*.

In some ways, *Madhabi* is a metaphor for Sohini's life. She's battled her share of demons and feels the only person she can really rely on is 'the one dwelling in you.' Single again after her marriage to renowned director Gautam Halder ended, Sohini feels she is finally in a place where she can give theatre all she's got as "a woman of confidence and with a sense of dignity".

Indeed, her energy is boundless; she is also a full-time English teacher at Rajkumari Memorial Girls High School in North Kolkata. She enjoys travelling and, every so often, her craft takes her overseas. Most of her stage performances are with Nandikar, the famous theatre group helmed by her father, although she does occasionally sign on with other directors.

Like many others before her, Sohini too has flirted with films. And even though she has only three movies under her belt, her performance in Aparna Sen's *Paromitar Ekdin* earned

her the title of Best Supporting Actress at the National Film Awards. Excerpts from an interview:

Those who are involved in acting portray different characters before the public. They are fortunate to experience life in an emotionally heightened state, a level from where one draws succour to live life through the concoction of emotion and feeling. As a child of Rudraprasad-Swatilekha-Nandikar, I have a slight advantage over other people, to have grown amid the ambience of theatre—a world outside the world of blood relatives.

I have grown up watching the pillars of Indian theatre spend hours with my parents, discussing theatre over black tea and cigarettes and with heaps of books around them, right here, in our home. *Ma* would sometimes lend her voice from the kitchen, to the beats of the *dhola* played by Bava [B V Karanth]. These people strove tirelessly to raise the standard of theatre to an international level. They didn't have swanky meeting rooms or plush libraries or well-equipped training centres. All they had was a noble spirit to reach their goal—the holy world of Indian theatre.

I learnt to cook and keep house when I was only eight. My parents told me that as I was the child of working parents, I would have to take responsibility for myself. Of course, they closely watched my academic progress and looked after my health but it was not possible for them to be home at all times.

I have dedicated myself to acting. And that is not because I am the daughter of Rudraprasad and Swatilekha Sengupta. My love for our theatre group Nandikar has encouraged me to be a devoted actor. But, of course, my parents have always been role models for me. They do not think of Nandikar alone but the entire theatre fraternity. Theatre is all we

live for and our relationships, emotions and feelings are all theatre-centric.

I am a single woman. I have decided to remain single for the rest of my life. Although it gets a little difficult at times and emptiness does creep in, experience and age have made me strong enough to face just about anything. I once asked *Baba* who I should trust in life. He replied, 'Believe in the person dwelling in you.' And, today, I am a woman of confidence with a sense of dignity.

Life changed course when I decided to end my marriage with theatre director Gautam Halдар and work as a school-teacher in 2006. Not only did this decision make me economically independent, it helped me grow as a person. In fact, it also helped me in another way as people could no longer say I performed well 'only' in Gautam's plays. He has his own school of ideas, which influenced me initially. But I felt I needed to emerge from that influence.

My father has always been a silent worker, a soul dedicated to theatre. His grit and determination have been the source of my inspiration, while *Ma* has taught me to be self-reliant. Both were professors of English literature and I never cease to wonder how they made time for rehearsals. They have never been late for a rehearsal, regardless of their other commitments. We never had a car, yet they are always there on time. *Baba* bought a car only recently. Actors of today would never condescend to use public transport. Neither my parents nor I suffer from hollow vanity.

I didn't walk into theatre; theatre walked into my life. I was three when my mother decided to marry theatre icon Rudraprasad Sengupta. As a result, I was initiated into theatre



My father has always been a silent worker, a soul dedicated to theatre. His grit and determination have been the source of my inspiration, while *Ma* has taught me to be self-reliant

and the legendary theatre group Nandikar. That was the first turning point in my life. The next turning point came in 1996, when I acted in the play *Gotraheen*. Before that, I hadn't really considered theatre but the success of *Gotraheen* gave me a foothold.

My parents never asked me to step into their shoes; rather, they wanted me to choose my own career. As it turned out, I did. I was introduced to acting gradually. I began attending rehearsals and I was assigned small jobs and given some small characters to play. I was always a director's delight as I was able to grasp ideas quickly. After my graduation in English literature from Jadavpur University in 1996, I took up acting.

I started full-fledged acting with Nandikar from 1996. My first appearance on stage was when I was three years old. In college, I played Shylock in a production of *The Merchant of Venice*. With Nandikar, I have done *Bappaditya*, *Sojon Badiyar Ghat*

and *Gotraheen*, among other plays. Outside Nandikar, I have acted in *Khunje Nao* and *Babli*.

Five people who have shaped my life and career are my parents, Nandita Di, Shibu and Manipuri actress Sabitri Heisnam. I used to suffer extreme mood swings and even avoided meeting close relatives. I passed through a traumatic stage, lost my natural mobility and gorged on fast food. Then I became so self-conscious about my obese figure that I even shied away from photo shoots. Now, I have confidence and enjoy every moment. I am healthy and that traumatic time is behind me. I owe this to two people—Nandita Roy and Shiboprasad Mukhopadhyay—who practically dragged me to the gym at Calcutta Rowing Club. I can never forget their contribution to making me what I am today. They mean everything to me.

I am also very inspired by my mother's acting, especially her cerebral style. I think Swatilekha Sengupta is a genius. I want to direct her in a stage adaptation of *The Yellow Wallpaper*, one of the first American feminist writings. I also have a play of Marsha Norman in mind.

I have considered doing independent projects. But I can hardly think of doing anything outside Nandikar. Not that I haven't worked outside Nandikar, like when Bratya Basu approached me. But Nandikar has so many members who are senior to me like Debshankar Halder, Sumanto Gangopadhyay and Parthapratim Deb.

This year, I plan to direct a movie *Streerpatra* (A Letter from a Wife). I have acted in movies *Aleek Sukh* (Hollow Pleasure), *Ichhe* (Wish) and, at present, I am doing rehearsals for a play *Nachni* (A Dance Belle). ❀

ACCU-CHEK® Active



ACCU-CHEK® Active

Accurate, fast & least painful with Pre-Meal & Post-Meal flagging



Accurate results in 5 seconds



Pre-Meal and Post-Meal markers



Strips remain stable till expiry date



7, 14, 30 days average



Least painful¹

Experience what's possible.

ACCU-CHEK® ExtraCare

(CUSTOMER SUPPORT AND SERVICE CENTER)

☎ 1800 22 6020 (toll-free) ☎ 30 300 400** • (Monday to Saturday, 08:00 AM to 08:00 PM) † SMS 'HELP' to 575735*** • email: indiaaccu-chek@roche.com • ¹ www.accu-chek.in

¹For ISMU/HTM, Lubbersen [†]Local call charges apply. Pre-Test code when calling from mobile phone. ***Max Rs. 3.00 per SMS

1. Kocher S et al. J Diabetes Sci Technol. 2009 Sep 13(5):1136-43

Accu-Chek Active: Harmony Ad: July 2013

ACCU-CHEK®



His latest book might just be what the doctor ordered for a country grappling with huge challenges and a vision for its future. Career diplomat and writer Pavan Kumar Varma tells Suparna-Saraswati Puri why he is the richer for playing so many contrasting roles

chanakya CALLING

Following in the footsteps of one of classical India's greatest thinkers and teachers is not easy, especially when your muse lived 2,500 years ago. But Pavan Kumar Varma was equal to the task. In his latest book, the 60 year-old has adapted the ideology of the great political strategist Chanakya to the challenges faced by contemporary India.

Unlike most other writers, Varma is a career diplomat and, ironically, writing happened quite by chance. Described by *The Guardian* as "one of the country's most perceptive writers", he wears more hats than most other writers, including scholar, poet, translator, cultural connoisseur, accomplished public speaker and budding politician. In his current assignment, he is cultural advisor to the chief minister of Bihar.

Varma has authored "more or less" 19 books that include fiction, non-fiction, poetry and mythology, and has translated the poetry of Gulzar, Kaifi Azmi and Atal Behari Vajpayee. Right now, though, he is excited about his latest work, *Chanakya's New Manifesto: To Resolve the Crisis within India*. Modelled on Chanakya's seminal work *Arthashastra*, Varma's own political manifesto is a call to action, especially to the youth of a country that has gone from being a fledgling democracy to one that is confronting its own future, as it were. Using a narrative style that is in the voice of the great Chanakya himself, Varma's treatise has been described as inspiring, relevant and practical, which is exactly how he hoped it would turn out.

But, like we said, there's much more to Pavan Kumar Varma than being a writer. His rich intellectual canvas weaves together so many hues that they are inseparable from the man himself. In an exclusive interview punctuated with impeccable Hindi, Varma revisits many chapters in his life as he attempts to deconstruct himself. **Excerpts:**

Can we briefly return to your roots?

I was born in Nagpur as my father was posted there at the time. He was deputy commissioner of the then state of CP [Central Provinces] and Berar. I am the youngest of four siblings, the fourth after three sisters. I grew up mainly in Delhi, where my father was posted in the Central Government. Except for a short stint at Scindia School, Gwalior, I did the rest of my schooling at St Xavier's, Delhi, then attended St Stephen's College and later studied law at the Delhi University.

Did you have any inkling that you might be a civil servant, writer, traveller or politician one day?

Children tend to think they will follow in their parents' footsteps. The possibility of joining the civil services was, therefore, always an option for me. However, I first thought I would become a lawyer as the world of academics attracted me. This was a natural choice because, apart from my father, my extended family is full of lawyers and jurists. In fact, my grandfather was the first Indian chief justice of the Allahabad High Court, and his son later also became the chief justice of that court. So, after graduating in history from St Stephen's College, I secured a degree in law. I joined the civil service in 1976.

Why the civil services vis-à-vis other professions?

When I took the exam, the civil services were a very coveted avenue of employment, unlike today when youngsters have multiple choices in newer and challenging professions. To be honest, I took the exam because it was expected of me. I was especially attracted to the world of diplomacy, and the possibilities the IFS [Indian Foreign Service] presented to discover that world.

As a bureaucrat, what lessons have you learnt?

That one should work fearlessly and speak one's mind on the basis of principle and conviction. The ability to think independently and to have the courage to state what you believe to be right is an option available to every bureaucrat. However, there could be unfavourable consequences for this, especially today. But I think the satisfaction and sense of personal solace far outweigh other considerations.

As a diplomat, was it challenging to represent a complex and sometimes indecisive country like India?

Of course, it is a challenge to effectively represent a country like India, a great civilisation but a young republic, the world's largest democracy struggling to make the transition towards progress and modernity. However, I have always found that if a diplomat is rooted in his or her culture and civilisational ethos, it is much easier to explain what India stands for and what it is seeking in its interaction with the world.

Can you cite any anecdotes on your early years in the IFS?

It is very important for a young diplomat to learn about the country you are serving in. During my first posting to Bulgaria, I made a special effort to immerse myself in its cultural ethos, and this paid me rich dividends as I was able to make some very useful friends who respected me for the knowledge I had about their country. One lady in particular, Ivanka Grubcheva, a well-known filmmaker there, became a close friend because I could discuss films with her. I invited her home to watch *Koshish*, a Hindi film. She was very closely linked to the elite in Bulgaria, and our friendship, based on a chance meeting, opened gates for me that would have usually remained closed to the junior-most officer in the Embassy.

What made you want to write? And was it intimidating penning your first book?

I wrote my first book, *Ghalib: The Man, The Times*, because I could not find a single book on Ghalib in any major bookstore in Delhi. It was like going to a bookstore in London and being told they had no books on Yeats or Eliot! I resolved then to write his biography myself, and do so in the context of his times, which were fascinating—the end of the Mughal Empire and the coming of the British. I was always fond of writing and as history was my subject, the project gave me immense satisfaction. Sure, I had to make a special effort to learn Urdu, in particular the script. I was a first-time author but I knew that my book was both relevant and timely. I was lucky that after several rejections, Penguin India picked up my book for publication. It did very well and is still selling, and has been translated in almost all the Indian languages.

As you are a diplomat, was it any easier to get your first work published?

Not at all. You may know the editor of a publishing house socially, but it is of little use in getting a book published. My first book on Ghalib received a robust number of rejections before Penguin India decided with some trepidation to go ahead with it. Once it did well, it became easier to get successive books published. In fact, after my first book, publishers reached out to me and I have always had more than one choice of publisher.



“India had a man to write the world’s first political treatise, *Arthashastra*, 2,500 years ago...I took the inspiration from him because we need to do it again. The challenges faced by this young republic require the power of original thought

You are a prolific author. With a career as busy as yours, how do you find the time to write?

I am good at time management. I write whenever I get the time, in the crevices of the day, and on weekends, if they are not encumbered. When I am in the midst of writing a book, I try to make the time to write every day. This requires great concentration and efficient time management, especially as most of my books are intensively researched. I believe a day has 28 hours. If you love something, you will always find time for it. Those who say they can’t are lying or disorganised or not sufficiently disciplined. In fact, I also rarely sacrifice my weekly game of golf and bridge or miss out on the social routine. Everything is possible in the scope of a day.

What made you choose Chanakya as the contextual subject for your latest book?

Chanakya is a source of inspiration, *prerna ke srot hain*. India had a man to write the world’s first political treatise, *Arthashastra*, 2,500 years ago...I took the inspiration from him because we need to do it again. The challenges faced by this young republic require *maulik soch*, the power of original thought. Chanakya’s great qualities were corrosive honesty, intellectual rigour, academic discipline, the ability to recognise a problem and not be mesmerised by its symptoms, to pinpoint leadership, to focus on talent, to arrange priorities including the interests of the state, to speak of the welfare of the people as the first premise of a polity, and to elaborate on the fact that no Constitution is worth anything if the treasury is empty. There are many aspects to Chanakya but these were the reasons I used him as a source of inspiration. I wrote my book in his name because I believe we need the same qualities to look at the problems and challenges we face today.

Can there be a text like the *Arthashastra* for a 21st century India caught in myriad socioeconomic and political problems?

I am not concerned with the minutiae of the *Arthashastra*, which dealt with the circumstances of its times. I have mentioned the elements that were part of Chanakya’s approach. These are as relevant today as they were then, perhaps even more relevant in today’s social environment.

How would you rank your latest book vis-à-vis other literary works?

This is an unfair question because I have written on a variety of subjects, from Ghalib, Krishna and India's *haveli*, to being Indian, becoming Indian and translations. But I believe this is my most significant book, the frankest and my most relevant book on contemporary India.

What are your thoughts on the youth of India, considering that your latest work was launched at IIT - Delhi and aims to engage the young reader?

The youth is angry, discontented, and feels alienated and frustrated, which is expected and has its reasons. I always say that till the time these concerns are not connected with thoughts, anger must engage with ideas. That will be the onset of a revolution. This is why we should not let go of our legacies. In *Chanakya's New Manifesto...*, there is a chapter titled "The Legacy of 1947", in which I have spoken about what was good about the era and what were the advantages in what was not good. Now, after 60 years, one has to battle modern repercussions. But to think that we should not change these times is akin to national suicide.

You wear many hats: diplomat, poet, author, translator. Do these roles ever conflict with each other during your creative journey?

No! In fact, I think each of these roles enriches the other. As a bureaucrat, I always found it a great asset to find a private world of my own to withdraw into, which was autonomous; and as a writer, I am happy to be involved in the larger canvas of a diplomat's life. There is no contradiction; it's like a musical point-counterpoint, each enriching the other.

In the sphere of personal relationships, especially as a father and a husband, does it help to be a diplomat or a politician?

My family, my wife Renuka in particular, has always been supportive of my writing endeavours. My wife has been a real asset to me in my career as a diplomat, especially in helping to make friends abroad and keeping a welcoming Indian home. My children Manvi, Batasha and Vedanta have, I believe, enjoyed my diplomatic career, discovering the world, but retaining their essential roots in India. Now that I have joined politics, I have their complete support.

You are an avid follower of classical Indian music. Is there anything in particular you enjoy listening to?

Classical music is my stress-buster. It is an exceptionally delicate and complex genre and a tribute to our great civilisation. I enjoy both vocal and instrumental music. My

BESTSELLERS

Some of Pavan Kumar Varma's works:

- *Ghalib: The Man, The Times* (1989)
- *Havelis of Old Delhi* (1999)
- *Krishna: The Playful Divine* (1993)
- *Yudhishtar and Draupadi* (1996)
- *The Great Indian Middle Class* (1998)
- *Being Indian: The Truth about Why the 21st Century Will Be India's* (2004)
- *Love and Lust: An Anthology of Erotic Literature from Ancient and Medieval India* (2004)
- *Kama Sutra: The Art of Making Love to A Woman* (2007)
- *The Book of Krishna* (2008)
- *Becoming Indian: The Unfinished Revolution of Culture and Identity* (2010)
- *When Loss Is Gain* (2012)

regret is that sometimes even our great maestros spend too little time in the slow, meditative elaboration of a *raga*, and come to the *drut* [fast-paced finale] too fast. A *raga* is the magnificent evocation of a mood, or a season, or a time of day, and thus needs to preserve its carefully evolved organic structure. It is different from a performance of popular music and this distinction must not become blurred.

You have edited an anthology of erotic literature from ancient and medieval India and adapted Vatsyayana's *Kamasutra*. From a society that celebrated eroticism to almost a Victorian approach towards sex today, do you think India is losing touch with what is essentially Indian?

Kama, or the enlightened pursuit of physical desire, was part of a balanced life in the Hindu worldview. *Dharma*, *artha*, *kama* and *moksha* were the four *purushartha* of a complete life. Each pursued in proportion, and none in exclusion, was supposed to lead to the final goal of *moksha*. Such a pragmatic, holistic and balanced view of life was unhinged partly by the puritanical influence of Islam, and then definitively by the Victorian morality brought in by the British.

Ghalib, Kaifi Azmi and Gulzar...you have translated them all. Do you read English poetry as well?

I am very comfortable with English, Hindi, Hindustani and Urdu. That is what enables me to translate the works of Urdu and Hindustani poets of repute, as well as the poetry of Hindi poets like Atal Behari Vajpayee, whose poems



“If you love something, you will always find time for it. Those who say they can't are lying or disorganised or not sufficiently disciplined. In fact, I also rarely sacrifice my weekly game of golf and bridge or miss out on the social routine. Everything is possible in the scope of a day

THE DIPLOMAT

- New York: With India's Permanent Mission to the United Nations
- Moscow: Director of the Jawaharlal Nehru Cultural Centre in the Indian Embassy
- Cyprus: High Commissioner of India
- London: Director of the Nehru Centre
- Press Secretary to the President of India
- Spokesperson in the Ministry of External Affairs
- Joint Secretary for Africa
- Director General of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations, New Delhi
- Bhutan: Indian Ambassador

I translated for Penguin on his request. I have never studied English literature in depth, but I have always enjoyed reading good English writing and this includes English poetry.

While working on translations, what kind of literary evolution do you experience considering the range of your translated works?

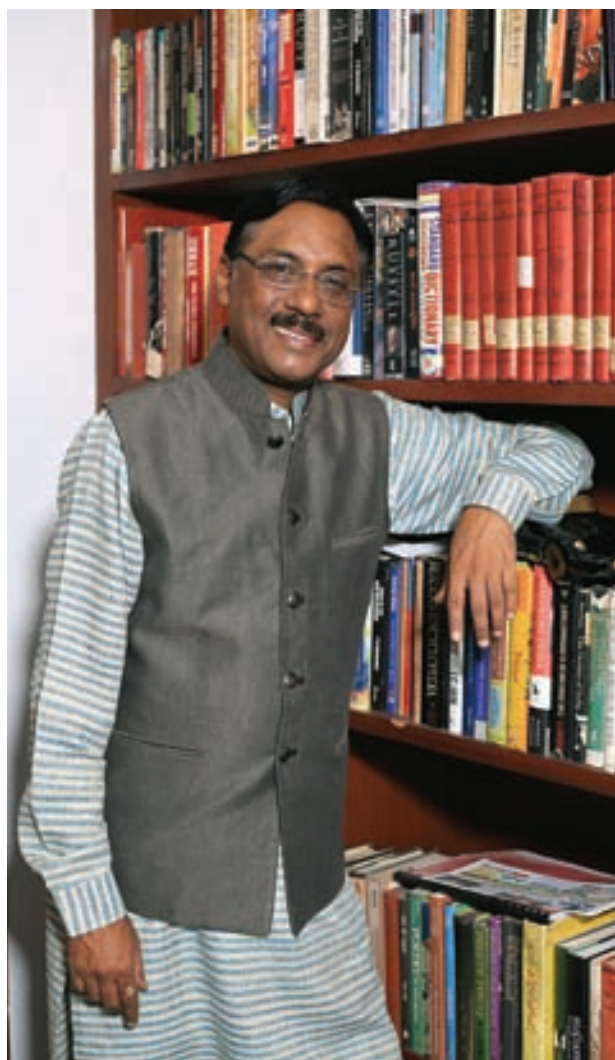
Translation appears deceptively easy but it is a difficult task because it is about expressing someone else's thoughts in your own language, in your own linguistic idiom but with so much discipline that you can't transgress the framework that the other person has written nor can you transcreate. There has to be the discipline of the translating framework. Allow me to provide the example of a couplet by Mirza Ghalib:

*Maut ka ek din muiyyan hai
Neend kyon raat bhar nahi aati*

I translated this as:

A day is fixed for one's death
Why pass then the night unslept?

It does manage to get the meaning compressed in the same brevity of framework. That's the challenge with translation. But within that, you tend to lose something. Once, after I had finished translating Gulzarji's poems, he sent me a single-sentence text message saying, "But they are not faithful!" This greatly upset me and when I spoke to him in the evening, I said, 'Gulzar saab, iska kya matlab hai?' He began laughing and replied, "Aap hi ne toh kaha ki translation is like a mistress—if she is beautiful, then she is not faithful and if she is faithful, then not beautiful!" Somebody once said that translation is like pouring perfume from one bottle to another. No matter how careful you are, some



of the fragrance is lost. You have to make it as good as possible and that is the challenge.

You've left your stamp on various genres: poetry, history, non-fiction and fiction. Whom do you bounce ideas off and who gets to read your first draft?

I turn to myself. Whenever I start a new book, I spend a great deal of time with the new subject, examining it from every angle and working out the structure and thrust of the book. Writing is essentially a lonely activity. You may consult others or benefit from what others have written but, ultimately, you have to journey alone while taking an idea from its conception to the completion of the book. However, I think my family, my wife and children 'suffer' most when I start a new book. They become my sounding board for ideas and points of view but they bear it stoically. I must thank them for their patience. Usually, my wife gets to read my first draft. 🌸

The first day at school

The first time you rode the bicycle.

The first crush you had at thirteen

The first drama you got a part in

The first day at college

The first date you went on

The first kiss

The first time you proposed

The first job interview

The first board meeting you addressed

The first day after retirement

BUTTERFLIES *never retire*

The first click of the mouse.

The all new

www.harmonyindia.org

harmony
celebrate age



Tale of a MODERN CITY

Tracing her steps to Nalanda, through the squalor and teeming millions of Patna, **Susan Visvanathan** makes a pitch for transforming the ancient trade route

This is one of the most unlikely cities in the world, but it can be a fruitful experience to visit it, because it is en route to Nalanda, the ancient university of the Maurya and Gupta periods. Patna leaves you breathless with its crowds and sense of urgency. The hotels for the rich and those for the middleclass traveller communicate that life here is lived by the moment. One should book a room according to one's purse, and then leave the rest to God, for the common denominator is the heat, the cost of Malda mangoes, and the torpor of the traffic.

Interestingly, the people of Patna are fiercely loyal to their city. They believe that they walk in the footsteps of the Buddha, Ashoka, Adi Sankara, not

to forget Kautilya and Megasthenes. For them, Magadh lies just below the dust of the university road, on the other side of which is the Ganga. They don't notice that the city badly needs a new coat of paint, they have no idea what the newcomer is talking about when she says, "Why is there hardly any public transport? Why are all the citizens regardless of age and status bundled into auto-rickshaws?" If you dare to say this publicly, they say, disdainfully, "*Sab Patna ki buraiyan dekhthe hain! Hum to bus achaiyan dekhte hain.*" (Everyone only sees the worst in Patna. We see the good things.) Those who live in Patna are invigorated by the heat, 46° in May, and the footfall of a hundred thousand people catching trains everyday to every corner of India. One senses immediately how much

of a trading entrepôt this ancient city is, how it must have received people from all over the world and the furthest corner of India. Think of Adi Sankara in the 8th century finding his way to Nalanda. What an amazing experience it was then; and now, the roads though dusty and crowded, still carry the excitement and turbulence of people on the move.

The aerodrome is quiet, right in the middle of the city, and planes take off as they do elsewhere, routinely without fuss. It is the railway station that is packed with people and shops. The people drink from the trolley vendors all sorts of juices from their traditional storehouse of summer coolers. *Bel* juice, tamarind juice, green mint juice, sugarcane juice, the list is endless. Poverty is not a bad word here,

The miasma of Patna is washed over by the palimpsests of history; the Greeks were here, Gandhi was here, ownership of cows has shifted from Rabri Devi to Nitish Kumar, yet the sense of the warm presence of cow dung and Mithila art work resonates here

it is a fact of their life, and they make sense of it, by just merging with the colours and sounds and the intensity of it all. A taxi to Nalanda is easy to find, but what you have to check is whether the driver is carrying a stepney and spare tyre. It seems surreal to find oneself in the middle of nowhere with not a spare tyre repair shop in sight. The huge trees on the road provide shelter, but it seriously is a risk. The drivers say that the heat burns the tyres faster than they can replace them, so there is nothing they can do. Stranded in the middle of a fallow field, one wonders when the tourist company will send another car.

But Nalanda is exquisite. Nothing can distract from its beauty, the stones lie in the sun, proof of habitation that once was the abode of kings, princes, priest, scholars, visitors, statesmen; a meditative space, where the quarters of the monks are small and neat, and their beds of stone speak of a time when the view of the stars was sufficient for a man to govern his soul by. Today, the Japanese and Korean monks and nuns, as much as the lay men and women from India and the Far East congregate here to understand their own selves, the bricks and the stone floors cool to the gaze. Maybe, getting to Nalanda is itself a conscious journey and the discomforts, if any, are part of the travellers' lore. How else can one understand the fulfilment of one's desire, except that one wanted to go there and one arrived at last, like entering the pages of a history book one read when one was seven years old? And the Archaeological Survey has done a perfect job of maintenance, unlike other places where it has invented and slapped on cement and paint, and created a fan-

tasy of reduplication. Here, the sheer simplicity of recovering an imagined space is to have artisans work with bricks, which have been reduplicated even in their mode of manufacture as much as their design. Returning to Patna through the interminable traffic one sees the Ganga at its broadest. One is humbled by the river's beauty, though one knows that this too is threatened, till the monsoon rejuvenates it. The sands are marked by the memory of waves, which like a still shadow lie upon it. The bridge lies over it hot and ambitious, speeding travellers onward, but underneath, the river lies lambent.

Patna welcomes the new generation with its love for music and dance and trendy newspapers, but it is the buzz of the local people that is really interesting. It is their own city; in its squalor lies a certain grammar. It is the weave of an existentialism quite extraordinary; this is the place from which people are forever escaping; this is the nest in which the legion stories of corruption have been so many that the inhabitants just shrug it off as a fact of life. What is it that allows them this control over emotions? What is it that makes them so keen to protect their city, with its shabby shop fronts and its lack of any sense of the real? It is the euphoria of history.

The miasma of Patna is washed over by the palimpsests of history; the Greeks were here, Gandhi was here, ownership of cows has shifted from Rabri Devi to Nitish Kumar, but the sense of the warm presence of cow dung and Mithila art work resonates in the popular consciousness. Everything is sacred and the coexistence of ritualistic Hinduism

and invocatory Buddhism is present in the temple near the railway station, where the morning *havan* is rented to the Hindus and in the evening the same grey cement temple reverberates with *Buddham sharanam* chants. When you are in this part of Patna, you are led to believe by the hawkers and the common people that there is no shortage of anything. You are persuaded that the wealth of India comes from its rural imagination and the excess that lies on the streets; everything is so cheap, everything so accessible. As the people are healthy, their immunity is good, and the diversity of street food is the index that no one need go hungry in Patna. Working-class culture has its own sites of food and life, and while the rich spend a lot of time presenting frugal amounts of food in aesthetic ways, the poor can eat fish and *rasgulla* in large quantities if they want, over and above their rice and vegetables if the state pays them sufficiently for the development work they do in the cities.

It is not surprising that Nalanda farmers were advertised as the most successful organic farmers in the country. It is a tribute to the real world that we have plenitude as the index of our rural wealth. What a pity to lose it to the rhetoric of industrialisation, which is the mainstay of 80 per cent of our people, eroded by the assumption that we must look like the West. If we look like the West, they will stop visiting us. Tourism will increase only if we allow the local communities to practise what they love to do. If their children have ceased fishing and farming and weaving, then by rural education and the opening-up and funding of Rural Agricultural Universities new incumbents to organic farming can be



Susan Visvanathan

PAST PERFECT, PRESENT TENSE (clockwise from top left): An aerial view of Nalanda; ruins of the ancient Buddhist university; choc-a-bloc streets in modern day Patna; the banks of the Ganges strewn with plastic waste


found. Metalwork, crafts and weaving are all desired objects of the tourist industry. New ways of training and job orientation to young people in the 5,000-year craft tradition would really help the country. Organic is the catch word. In places like Bihar and Tamil Nadu, which are farmer-friendly states, organic is a way of life.

By visiting Nalanda via Patna, facilities in Patna will improve, because visitors will ask for better places to stay; and by attending to the possibility of developing a history trail, so beloved to tourists, the city will receive a necessary coat of paint.

Jaipur was recognised for its tourist potential when the local people made decisions about how to deal with it. Kerala is learning to negotiate, with inbuilt rules about pollution and human rights, so that it can provide employment. Connaught Place, in Delhi, is renovated when required, so why not the merchant streets of Patna known since ancient times to traders and visitors? It already has a beautiful cantonment; now civilian Patna needs to be attended to. Elites are not necessary in transforming a city; good government can do the same if it puts its mind to it, and is concerned about the life of people. The UP *bhaiyya* and the

Bihari and Rajasthani workers have built up every part of India with their good humour and expertise. May not their own home towns and villages receive attention, so that civic sense is inbuilt into the lives of humans wherever they are?

To accept the continuing beauty of Nalanda, one has to first make Patna a tourist venue. It's easy to do so, if the local communities and government stop aggrandising on property mafiadom and concentrate on a city of the people, for the people. Rather than complain about endemic corruption, let's work with success stories. ✨

A photograph of an elderly man with a grey beard and a young girl with dark hair, both smiling and playing in a pond. The man is in the water, and the girl is sitting on a wooden dock, reaching out towards him. The water is dark blue, and the dock is made of wooden planks.

**Most silver citizens
would give anything
to experience youth again.**

**Our yearly subscription
costs just Rs. 324.**

Wouldn't it be great to have a second childhood? To start life afresh?
Because at Harmony, a magazine for people above fifty-five, we believe
that age is in the mind. Which is why, you should live young.
Visit us at : www.harmonyindia.org

harmony
celebrate age



Subscribe to **Harmony - Celebrate Age** now and get

MOVIE DVDs



Subscription Card

(Please tick below for your choice of subscription)

☐ I would like to gift a subscription **OR**

☐ I want to subscribe to HARMONY

Subscription	You Pay	You Get
<input type="checkbox"/> 2 years (24 issues)	₹ 576	Movie DVDs hamper worth ₹ 250
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 year (12 issues)	₹ 324	Movie DVDs hamper worth ₹ 125

Please fill in **CAPITAL LETTERS** and mail the form below with your Cheque / DD to Harmony Care, Living Media India Limited, A-61, Sector, 57, Nodia (U.P.) - 201301. In case of Credit Card payment you may fax the form to : 0120-4078080.

Personal details: Mr/Mrs. _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

I wish to pay by: ☐ Cheque ☐ Demand Draft

I am enclosing Cheque / DD No. _____ dated _____ drawn on (specify bank) _____

made payable to **M/s LMIL-A/C Harmony** for ₹ _____

(Add ₹ 10/- for non-Delhi cheques) or please charge to my Credit Card.

☐ Amex

☐ Visa

☐ Master Card

☐ Diners

Card Number

Card Member's Name

Card Expiry Date _____ Month Year

Card Member's Signature _____

Date of Birth _____ Date Month Year

I want to gift the subscription to (Please do not fill if subscribing for yourself):

Mr/Mrs/Ms _____ First Name _____

Last Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Postal Code _____ Country _____

Phone (Off.) _____ (Res.) _____

E-mail: _____

Website: www.harmonyindia.org For queries e-mail us at: harmonycare@intoday.com

harmony
celebrate age

SUBSCRIPTION TERMS & CONDITIONS: Rates and offer valid in India only. Allow 3-4 weeks for processing of your subscription. Free subscription gift will reach you within 8-10 weeks of commencement of your subscription. It will not be possible to entertain any request for cancellation of your subscription once your free gift has been despatched. The free subscription gifts are covered by guarantee for manufacturing defect / quality / damage in transit as per standards laid down by the manufacturer. Add ₹ 10 for non-Delhi cheques. Please write your name and address on the reverse of the Cheque / DD. Do not send cash. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi / New Delhi only. The publisher reserves the right to terminate or extend this offer or any part thereof at any time, or to accept or reject any or all forms received at their absolute discretion without assigning any reason. Information regarding such cancellation / extension / discontinuance will however be published subsequently in the magazine. For further details, please contact our Customer Care Department: Write in to: **Harmony Care, Living Media India Limited, A-61, Sector-57, Noida (U.P.)- 201301**; Call: (95120) 2479900 from Delhi & Fbd; (0120) 2479900 from Rest of India, Fax: (0120) 4078080; E-mail: harmonycare@intoday.com

NOTE: Harmony collects and processes personal information for the purposes of customer analysis, market research and to provide you with any further details from our organisation. Steps have been taken to ensure that consistently high standards of data protection are in place.



INSIDE

p72: New beginnings

p77: Queen of motion pictures

Etcetera

CULTURE ● LEISURE ● LIFESTYLE ● BOOKS ● MISCELLANY

ART

Cast in **BRONZE**

Musui and Maiya constitute a pure flow of energy, modernist sculptor K S Radhakrishnan tells Ambica Gulati

His journey with Musui and Maiya is legendary. Smiling, flying, creating a web... for sculptor K S Radhakrishnan, his yin and yang characters tell many a story. Incarnated in the late 1990s, they are the male and female principles of life cast in many roles, from the ordinary to the famous Mona Lisa. In a recent show in Gurgaon's Art Pilgrim gallery, Radhakrishnan's iconic bronze craft shows the sculptor's evolution through life along with his characters. "This is my journey, not the destination," he says with a smile. "If I reach the destination, I will come to a standstill and that is not what I want."

Prabuddha Dasgupta

His muse Musui was actually a young male model from the Santhal tribe during his student days in Santiniketan; later, it evolved to be a part of his bronze stories. While Musui was conceived as impish, mischievous, innocent and childlike, to Maiya he added feminine aspects. Considered to be the 'alter ego of the maker', the duo comes to life with infectious smiles and honest expressions.

Among his other creations, Radhakrishnan's favourite is 'Terraflly'; terra being the earth and fly being the feeling of elevation. "They are rooted yet elevated. Terraflly shows that someone is taking an aerial view. You may not be looking at that someone, but that someone is always there and the consciousness that you cannot escape from this someone," reasons the 57 year-old. In his recent works exhibited in Kochi, the constant flow of energy was conceptualised as a 'Firefly'. Delving into this concept, he says, "All of us always want to be in a place other than where we are, this constant flow is what my sculptures capture—an air-bound lightness."

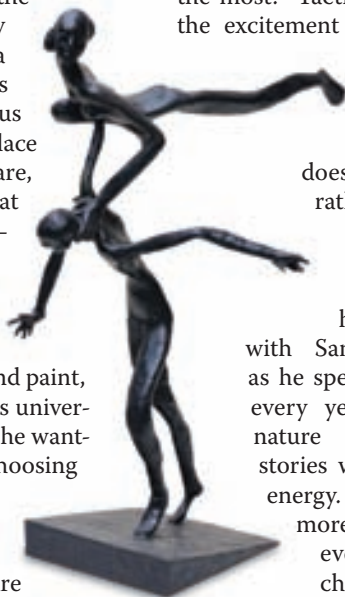
Born in Kottayam in Kerala, Radhakrishnan always wanted to draw and paint, but it was only during his university days that he realised he wanted to be a sculptor. On choosing a difficult and not-so-popular medium, Radhakrishnan says, "I did not worry about the future

or money. Influenced by my teacher and mentor, the legendary Ramkinkar Baij, I made the choice between a brush and a hammer. A sculpture has more dimensions and stays in the real space. I had a choice between the pictorial and the real and I chose the real." Accomplishments like the Lalit Kala Akademi Fellowship and Birla Academy of Art & Culture Award have validated his choice.

Earlier, he would make the composition for the metal himself but now cakes are readily available. However, Radhakrishnan says the wait for the final product does not make him impatient. "I work with the sculpture till the clay stage and in the casting stages, and then I move on to the next piece." In his life-size, tiny and intricate figures, he brings alive memories that have touched him the most. "Tactility is important and the excitement lies in bringing the

unknown to the known," he observes. A sculpture going wrong doesn't mean corrections; rather, it creates space for itself.

Meanwhile, Radhakrishnan's tryst with Santiniketan continues as he spends some time there every year, connecting with nature and creating more stories with the easy flow of energy. In 2016, we will see more stories from these ever-smiling, lovable characters.



For the record

Record music lovers rejoice. On the occasion of 'Record Store Day' on 20 April 2013, avid vinyl record collector Pilak Bhatt opened a new shop in Kandivli's V Mall in Mumbai. The shop, Music Circle, has over 5,000 old LPs. Some rare gems include Pandit Amarnath, Premchand Prakash, Pink Floyd, M S Subbulakshmi and classic collections of Gauhar Jaan and Ustad Allauddin Khan. "LPs are timeless and have a sentimental value attached to them," says the 54 year-old. "Nothing can beat their sound clarity. If preserved well, which means stacked vertically in racks, they can last ages." So, are Indians still crazy for spinning turntables? "There's a renewed interest today among senior citizens and record music lovers in wanting to cherish some nostalgic moments," he tells us. "But the scene has always been vibrant in the US, UK and Germany." If you want to buy or sell old LPs and gramophone record players, contact Bhatt on (0) 9820365979 or email vinylsfromindia@gmail.com

KEEPING IT REAL: MILKHA SINGH IS WORKING CLOSELY WITH FILMMAKER RAKEYSH OMPRAKASH MEHRA TO SEE THAT THE BIOPIC BASED ON HIS LIFE TURNS OUT TO BE AN AUTHENTIC PORTRAYAL. *BHAAG MILKHA BHAAG*, STARRING FARHAN AKHTAR AS THE OLYMPIC SPRINTER, WILL FEATURE SOME LESSER-KNOWN DETAILS OF SINGH'S LIFE, KNOWN ONLY TO THE CLOSE FAMILY. DECLARING THAT HE OWES EVERYTHING TO HIS EARLY DAYS, THE SPORTSMAN HAS MADE PUBLIC HIS INVOLVEMENT WITH FRIENDS WHO STOLE COAL AND HIS BRUSH WITH THE LAW.



Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani
hospital & medical research institute

Every Life Matters

INTRODUCES **PAIN MANAGEMENT CLINIC**



**Our Experts Manage Any Kind of Pain to
Restore Quality of Life.**

Get Your Smile Back.

A social initiative by

RELIANCE

Kokilaben Dhirubhai Ambani Hospital & Medical Research Institute
Four Bungalows, Andheri (W), Mumbai - 400 0053

For Appointments Call +91 22 3066 6666 / 3099 9999 or SMS 'KDAH' to 55454

Web: www.kokilabenhospital.com

[f /KokilabenHospitalMumbai](#) [t /KDAHMumbai](#) [i /kdahMumbai](#)



Rhythm divine

The ancient interiors of the historical Ramappa temple in Warangal resonated with the pulsating sound of *damroo*. The detailed intricate carvings portraying a forgotten era were matched by the graceful *abhinaya* of veteran Kuchipudi and Bharatanatyam dancer **Swapnasundari**, who along with her students performed Vilasini Natyam, a dance form performed by temple courtesans (*devadasi*) in the pre-Independence era. The occasion was World

Heritage Day on 18 April, as well as the 800th Foundation Day of the 12th century Shiva temple in Andhra Pradesh.

In 1947, the temple dance form was banned when the Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act was passed. Through Vilasini Natyam, Swapnasundari is resurrecting and rejuvenating the form through her many performances and workshops. She spoke to **Sai Prabha Kamath** on her efforts to demonstrate the rich tapestry

of the Indian temple court dance tradition. Excerpts from an interview:

What is Vilasini Natyam? What is it based on and what are the techniques involved?

Vilasini Natyam is a contemporary representation of the temple, court and theatrical dance tradition that has been neglected for long, even though it is an idiom carrying the principles outlined by Bharata in the *Natya Shastra*. It has its own grammar, vo-



Photo courtesy Swapnasundari

cabulary, repertoire and presentation, all not related to any of the classical dance forms.

Could you outline its history?

On account of the Devadasis (Prevention of Dedication) Act in 1947, trained female dancers called *devadasi* and *ra-jadasi* had to sever ties with the temples that had hitherto supported their art. During the same period, *zamindar* and royal households also ceased to exist. Consequently, this tradition re-

mained dormant for 50 years. I took up the study of this dance tradition directly from senior Andhra Pradesh women artists whose predecessors had once been temple and court dancers. I had to do a lot of work to reinvest it with artistic vigour. In 1994-95, this revived form was rechristened Vilasini Natyam.

What made you revive this form of classical dance?

The urge to strengthen the intrinsic values of Indian performing arts made me revive it. Traditional Indian dance is not just a means of entertainment but highly educative. Vilasini Natyam has reinforced this belief and provided a growth point for me to enrich myself as an artist. I was also deeply impressed by the sheer artistic power contained in the song-dance tradition of the temple court dancers who taught me. The elements of ritual dance are almost absent in many of our established dance forms, though ritual dances form a very valuable part of India's intangible cultural heritage. It is a matter of great satisfaction that through my consistent efforts, most of these are now being done in Vilasini Natyam.

During the process of its reclamation, you have adapted Vilasini Natyam to the present-day social context. What's the feedback from dance connoisseurs?

Vilasini Natyam has featured in major national dance festivals and has drawn wide acclaim from critics and the audience alike. The audience now sees it as a distinct, independent style in the echelons of Indian classical dance.

You have been conducting educative workshops on Vilasini Natyam. How has the response been?

There is a lot of curiosity and interest, especially among those who are looking at the content, history and roots of classical dance. Through interactions at my workshops, people reconnect with a rich and ancient dance tradition. A workshop I conducted in London also evoked a lot of interest.

LOFTY CALLING

SIXTY YEARS AGO, MAN CONQUERED THE WORLD'S HIGHEST PEAK, THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT EVEREST. EDMUND HILLARY AND SHERPA TENZING NORGAY MADE HISTORY AND LEFT BEHIND A LONG TRAIL OF FANS AND FANATICS. TO MARK THE ANNIVERSARY, NEPAL ORGANISED A HIGH-ALTITUDE MARATHON AND CLEAN-UP DRIVE AT THE BASE OF THE SUMMIT. SINCE THE 1953 EXPEDITION, CLOSE TO 4,500 PEOPLE HAVE CLIMBED THE SUMMIT. IN FACT, KANCHHA SHERPA (SEE PICTURE), ONE OF THE LAST SURVIVING MEMBERS OF THE ORIGINAL TEAM, JOINED THE CELEBRATORY



PROCESSION IN KATHMANDU. REINHOLD MESSNER, A MOUNTAINEER WHO HAS STEPPED ON EVERY PEAK HIGHER THAN 8,000 M, WAS ALSO PRESENT. WITH ALMOST 35 EXPEDITIONS TO THE SUMMIT HELD EVERY YEAR, CONCERNS ABOUT POLLUTION ON THE MOUNTAINS ARE INCREASING BY THE DAY. IN AGREEMENT WITH SHERPA TENZING NORGAY'S DISPLEASURE OVER THIS COMMERCIALISATION AND IMPACT, THE NEPAL GOVERNMENT IS PLANNING TO PLACE A LIMIT AT 8,850 M. WHICH ALSO MEANS THAT 80 YEAR-OLD JAPANESE CLIMBER YUICHIRO MIURA, WHO CLIMBED EVEREST IN MAY, MAY REMAIN THE OLDEST PERSON EVER TO SCALE IT.

Art beat



Photographs by Irtif Lone

The fine work of Suffering Moses finds pride of place in various collections across the world. **Irtif Lone** traces the journey

Walking along the banks of the Jhelum in Srinagar, mighty chinar trees sway gently in the soft breeze. Soaking in the beauty around it, Suffering Moses, a 173 year-old antique craft shop well-known for its exquisite papier-mâché and wooden artefacts, exudes a magical aura. Inside the modest shop, an antique wooden piece with intricate carving draws you to it almost magnetically. “The fine piece is 70 years old,” reveals Muhammad Sadiq Wani, the 65 year-old owner. “You won’t find another evidence of this carving anywhere else. A lot of patience and time, probably years, have gone into making this single piece.”

In Wani’s office, adjacent to the shop, history seems to come alive; the place is rich with artefacts no less than

HERITAGE

50 years old. The artistic *khatamband* ceiling, an excellent example of the age-old art of making geometrical patterns using small pieces of wood, radiates old-world charm. Wani’s workshop is overflowing with delicately designed art pieces such as a rectangular wooden flower vase, a papier-mâché pen stand and an old telephone apparatus.

Suffering Moses has a range of artefacts on sale: hand-painted papier-mâché and copper-lined bowls, lacquered wooden treasure chests, vibrant floral trinket boxes and hand-made candlesticks, intricately designed *pashmina* and *jamavar* shawls, vintage woollen rugs, exotic petit point and exquisite pieces of Ari embroidery. The making of these wonderful artefacts—that has admirers around the world—involves rigorous

processes. For example, in the case of papier-mâché, extensive preparation goes into the making of its basic structure, application of the colour and design. To produce world-class products that last a long time, Kashmiri craftsmen prefer natural colours.

The age-old craft shop is a perfect example of the cultural impressions Muslim preacher Mir Syed Ali Hamdani left on the Valley 700 years ago. Wani’s ancestors were among the artisan families brought by the Persian poet all the way from Iran. The families were masters in their own trade: painters, silversmiths, shawl-makers. “My ancestors specialised in papier-mâché, wood carving and embroidery,” says Wani with pride.

These arts flourished during the British rule in India. To overcome the

Art flourished during the British rule when they headed for Kashmir for its cool climate; expert artisans were hired to decorate their house boats

scorching summer heat, the British elite used to head for Kashmir to enjoy its cool climate. They bought movable boats called *donga*, converted them into houseboats and hired expert artisans to decorate the interiors. "It was during this period that many household decorative items like flower vases, bedside tables, pen stands and writing tables were introduced," says Wani. "Later, these beautiful artefacts were also exported."

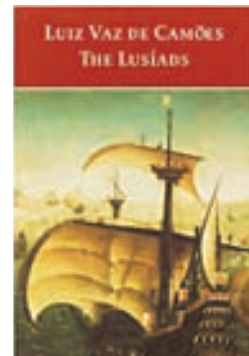
In 1935, Suffering Moses opened a shop in Connaught Place in Delhi where Lady Mountbatten often came to shop. "But during Partition, the shop was looted," Wani recounts. "Later, my father went back, only to find that it was turned into custodial property. But many of our customers from England used to come even after 1947."

Though the handicrafts industry in Kashmir thrived for centuries, things have changed in the past 25 years owing to the extended conflict in the region. Apart from having an impact on production, there has also been a rise

in the production of fake handicrafts. "We are just pulling along now," reveals Wani. "We are dependent on tourists for business, but inflow has fallen drastically because of the conflict. Last year was an exception however; I hope this year is good too."

There are other problems too. "The new generation is not too enthusiastic about this field," adds Wani. "Even younger people within the family are not interested in taking it up as a profession because they want to pursue education and other professions. Lack of patience is another reason; this skill takes 10-15 years to hone. But amid all these challenges, Suffering Moses has always given importance to quality, sometimes even at the cost of profit."

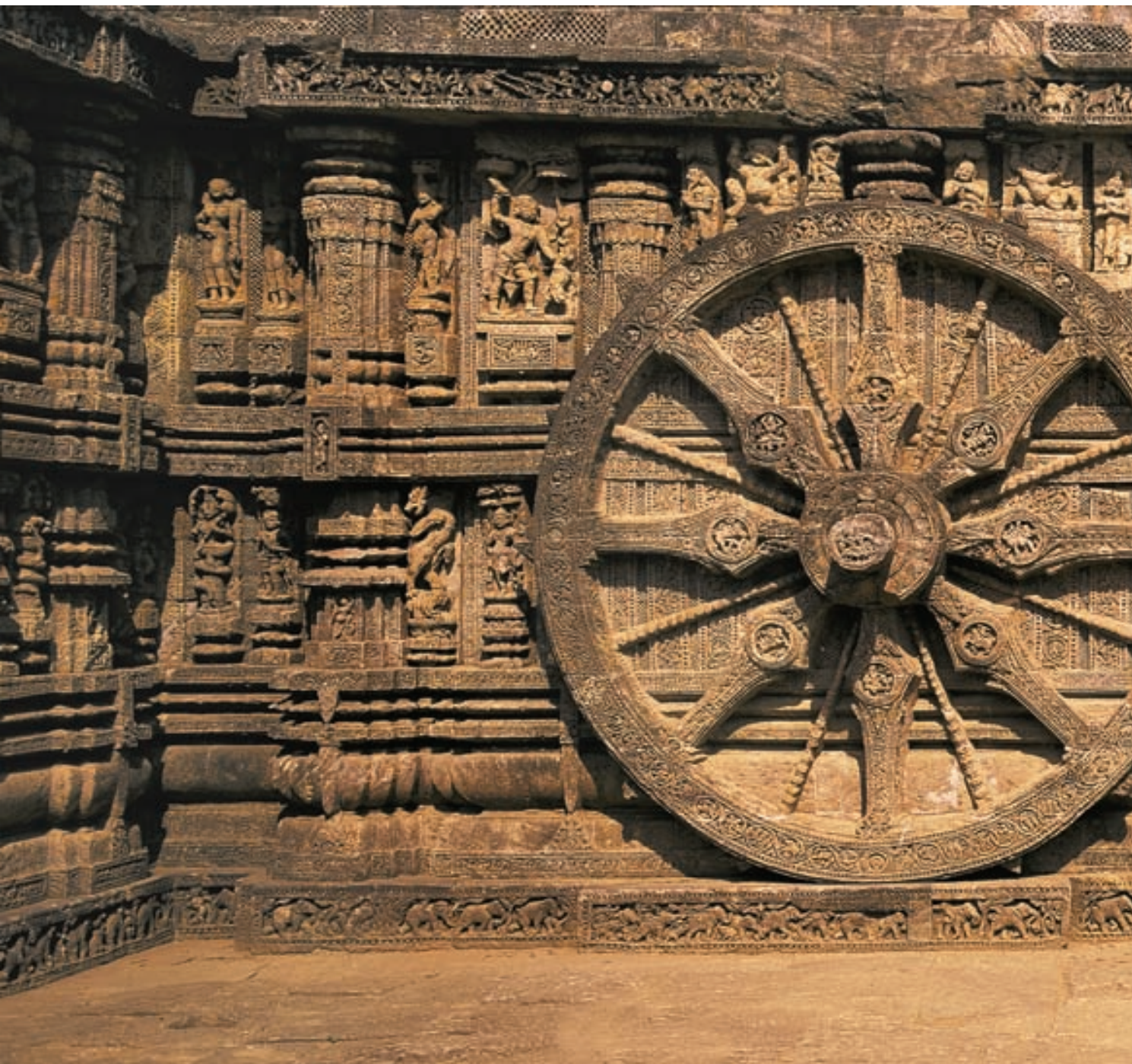
Now the question that should have been the first: Why the name 'Suffering Moses'? "The name was bestowed upon us in 1840 by a British Lord," answers Wani. "It's reflective of the pain one goes through in creating each piece of craft. For example, a fine *kani jamavar* shawl takes almost four years to make." No pain, no gain, right?



SETTING THE STORY STRAIGHT

PORTUGUESE MIGHT ON THE SEA AND THE SUBSEQUENT GOAN INVASION WERE IMMORTALISED BY LUIS DE CAMOES IN HIS 16TH CENTURY EPIC POEM *THE LUSIADS*. FIVE CENTURIES LATER, A 69 YEAR-OLD GOAN WRITER AND RETIRED PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY HAS HIGHLIGHTED FLAWS IN CAMOES'S FANTASY IN VERSE. THE 'GENTILES', THE WORD WITH WHICH THE PORTUGUESE IN THAT ERA DESCRIBED GOANS, WEREN'T UNLETTERED AS BELIEVED. AVE CLETO AFONSO HAS WRITTEN *O VATICINIO DO SWARGA*, AN ESSAY THAT RESTORES THE LOST DIGNITY OF GOANS BY COMPARING GOAN LITERATURE WITH THAT OF THE PORTUGUESE. HIS ANALYSIS OF CAMOES'S FANTASTICAL POEM ALSO REVEALS THAT THE POET DIDN'T MAKE HIS SEA TRAVELS WITH VASCO DA GAMA AS BELIEVED AND WASHES AWAY THE GLORIFICATION OF PORTUGUESE ADVENTURES. ADDING NEW HISTORICAL ELEMENTS, AFONSO PRESENTS A FRESH PERSPECTIVE ON THE COLONIAL AND MISSIONARY ATROCITIES OF THE TIME. WHILE *THE LUSIADS* BORROWED FROM GREEK MYTHOLOGY, AFONSO'S ESSAY DRAWS FROM INDIAN MYTHOLOGY. ONCE A JOURNALIST, AFONSO HAS ALSO COMPILED A KONKANI-ITALIAN DICTIONARY AND WRITTEN BOOKS ON SUCCESSION AND INVENTORY LAWS IN GOA.





Rock concert



Designed as a chariot of Surya, the massive Konark Temple in Orissa is a 13th century portrayal of civil life and war under the Eastern Ganga Dynasty. Said to be built during King Narasimhadeva's reign, it's a World Heritage Site and a tribute to the tradition of worshipping the Sun

Capturing the sensibilities of different eras and the aesthetics of various religious beliefs, Indian architecture is a potpourri of myriad forms, schools and styles. Today, it manifests itself as the towering *minar* of Islam, exquisite cave architecture of the Buddhists, the pristine glory of Dilwara Temple, the painted *gopuram* of Meenakshi Temple and the erotica of Khajuraho. ***Masterpieces of Traditional Indian Architecture*** by **Satish Grover** (Roli Books; ₹ 595; 144 pages) reflects the evolution of the stone art over the centuries

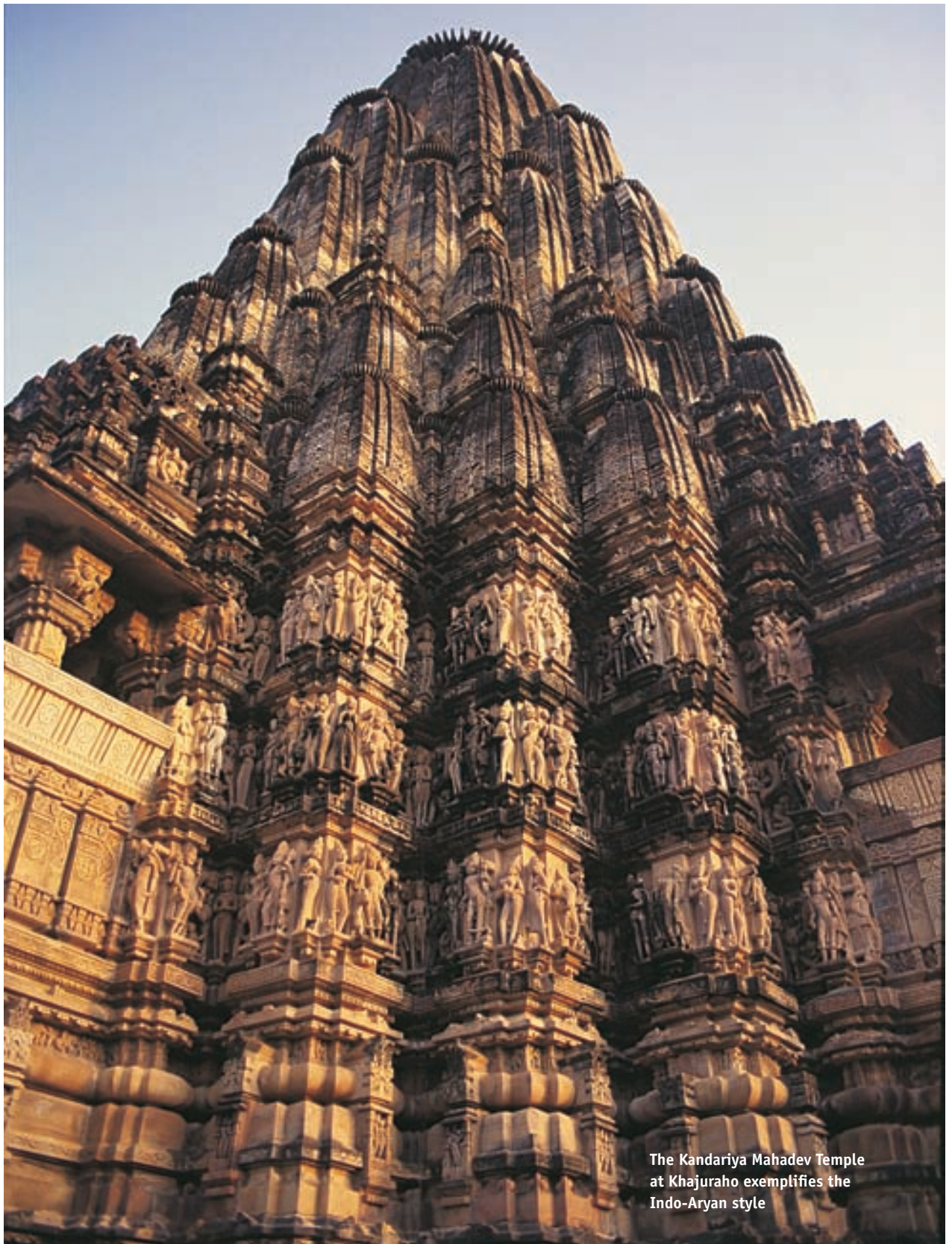


The *swarnapushp kandini* or the tank of the golden lilies at Meenakshi Temple is surrounded by ghat on all sides and resembles the Great Bath of Mohenjodaro. In the backdrop can be seen the imposing *gopuram*, many of which line the route to the shrine, painted tier upon tier in rich colour; (left) one of the four *torana* surrounding the Sanchi Stupa, a fine example of Buddhist architecture and possibly the oldest stone structure in India (it is a World Heritage Site as well). Crowned by the *chhatra*, the Stupa is said to honour and shelter Buddha's relics

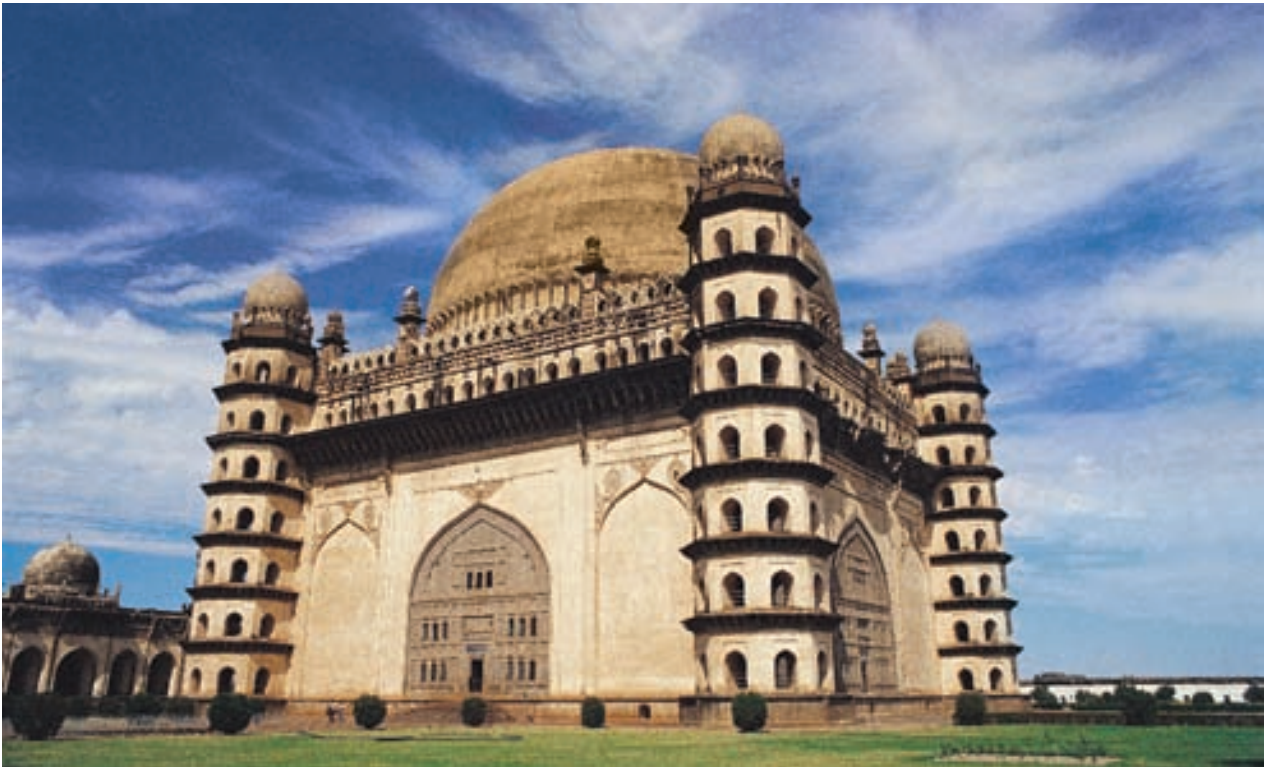


(Clockwise from top) A section of the sensuously vivid yet mysterious Kandariya Mahadev Temple; Sonar Qilla in Jaisalmer is a huge rock and sand fort; the houses of the affluent in Jaisalmer were built over a basement, which offered a cool retreat during the hot summer months and a warm abode in winter. A staircase ascended from the courtyard to the rooms on the upper floor of the *haveli*





The Kandariya Mahadev Temple
at Khajuraho exemplifies the
Indo-Aryan style



(Clockwise from top) No camouflaged support was employed in the structure of the Gol Gumbaz, illustrating the effectiveness of the technique; a tomb intricately decorated with inlay work and pietra dura showing flowers drooping gracefully as if paying homage to those buried in the Taj Mahal, a glorious culmination of the artistic fusion of Indian architecture and Mughal ornamentation; the Dilwara Jain Temple is an architectural extravaganza in white marble



New beginnings

Shiv K Kumar has lived many lives as a poet, novelist, short story writer, playwright, translator, academic and critic. In his acclaimed novel *Nude before God*, he lays bare the questions of humanity's inescapable end, plying us with a story of the afterlife. This satire on death, and life thereafter, was appreciated by celebrated English author Graham Greene, who called it "a most amusing book on a daring subject". Now, in a re-edition (Random House; ₹ 299; 168 pages), it gives us new reasons to live and laugh. In an interview with **Srirekha Pillai**, the 92 year-old author handles questions on life, death and everything in between.

***Nude before God* is a brilliant satire on the afterlife. How did the idea dawn on you?** **AUTHORSPEAK**

As a poet and novelist, I have often thought about the end of things; death and annihilation. Incidentally, I have just completed a new collection of poems titled *Where Have The Dead Gone?* Every cremation provokes me into introspection. I am fascinated by the part in *The Mahabharata*, where Yudhisthira is asked by the Yaksha, 'What is the greatest wonder about human beings?' Yudhisthira says, 'Although every man sees death around him, he somehow imagines that he may be lucky enough to live forever'. So, thinking about death carries me to the point where I can see human existence in the correct perspective. While planning *Nude before God*, I imagined my protagonist to fantasise how life would unfold itself after death. Most of us feel excited over the birth of a child, but what about the body that is consigned to flames on the cremation ground? Wise is the man who can handle both birth and death on the same plane.

Yama tells the main protagonist in the book, 'You seem to be a victim of self-delusion.' Aren't all human beings victims of self-delusion?

Indeed, my protagonist is a victim of self delusion. But don't most human beings delude themselves into believing what is not there? In my opinion, the only way to survive any crisis is to imagine that it never happened. Self-delusion is a form of fantasy, which enables a person to salvage himself from every difficult situation. In this context, I think Argentine writer Jorge Luis Borges was right when he remarked that fantasy and hallucination are more real than the ground reality.

Are you a believer in the law of karma and rebirth, two themes that run through the book?

I do believe in the law of karma and rebirth, because this seems to be the only answer to the great riddle of human existence. In this novel, I have mentioned rather facetiously that God seems to have a scientific mind. If there were no rebirths, where would the great creator store every soul after death? The recycling in nature—of day and night, different seasons—don't they reinforce the principle of rebirth? A soul is recycled after death so it may have another life. It is like using all waste matter as a fertiliser to feed vegetation. Of course, nobody can empirically say where the soul, after the death of the body, is reborn. This is a door which leads one to nowhere.

If a child dies at the age of five, how does one explain its death when it has not committed any sin? The answer is that in its previous life, it must have been involved in some gruesome act so its life has to be brought to an end (as punishment). Otherwise, man will remain wallowing in the mystery of crime and punishment.

Your prose is marked by an underlying sarcasm and humour at the way the world functions and deals with its living and dead. As an author, how difficult is it to make the reader laugh with you?

I believe that sarcasm, humour and irony are the only ways to make people sit up and introspect. It is only through satire that a writer can make his point as effectively as possible. A sentimental portrayal of a human situation does not cut any ice. If a writer has used satire skilfully, he should be able to make the reader laugh. I believe we Indians lack a sense of humour. This is because most of us are preoccupied with life before birth and what follows death. Why not live in the present and enjoy life full-bloodedly? To quote D H Lawrence, 'There is no before or after, it is now'.

The story also works as a fable of self-awakening. Was the writing cathartic for you as well?

To me, this question is somewhat irrelevant, because it is not my story. I have only created a protagonist with whom I empathised. I invite the reader's attention to the preface

in which I have said that it is the story of someone I happened to know. So, it is the protagonist who feels therapeutically purged of a suspicion about his wife's betrayal. But, of course, as the writer is there in every story he creates, he also comes to terms with his own problems.

Whether it's poetry or prose, animals have been an integral part of your literary musings.

I am a lover of animals and they form an integral part of my psyche. I have always kept a pet dog as my companion. It was only when I lost my last pet a few months ago that I decided never to adopt another one. As I am 92, I didn't want my new puppy to miss me. I also believe that animals are more perceptive than most human beings. A dog particularly is endowed with the faculty of premonition. We keep reading in the papers about how a dog predicted an earthquake or even death. So, in a sense, animals are truly divine. This may explain why my fiction and poetry bring in animals in one form or another.



As someone who has been equally at ease with poetry and prose, what is your preferred medium of expression?

My first love has always been poetry, because it is the most distilled medium of creative expression. As an undergraduate, I carried in my mind Percy Bysshe Shelley's definition of poets as 'the unacknowledged legislators of the world'.

What are the projects you are currently working on?

I am working on a novel based on the life of the Buddha, who fascinates me as one of the most illustrious figures in world history. This manuscript, titled *Journey to Enlightenment*, is scheduled for publication by Random House before the end of the year. I have also completed another manuscript that presents my conversations with such celebrities as Lord Bertrand Russell, T S Eliot, E M Forster, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Henry Kissinger and Graham Greene.

Most silver citizens would give anything to experience youth again.

Our yearly subscription costs just Rs. 324.

Visit us at : www.harmonyindia.org

harmony
celebrate age

The final act

We pay tribute to Julius Caesar, after whom the month of July is named, with an extract from John Dryden's 1683 translation of Plutarch's *Life of Caesar*

Fate, however, is to all appearance more unavoidable than unexpected. For many strange prodigies and apparitions are said to have been observed shortly before Caesar's death. As to the lights in the heavens, the noises heard in the night, and the wild birds which perched in the forum, these are not perhaps worth taking notice of in so great a case as this. One finds it also related by many that a soothsayer bade Caesar prepare for some great danger on the Ides of March. When this day was come, Caesar, as he went to the senate, met this soothsayer, and said to him by way of raillery, "The Ides of March are come," who answered him calmly, "Yes, they are come, but they are not past." The day before his assassination he supped with Marcus Lepidus; and as he was signing some letters according to his custom, as he reclined at table, there arose a question what sort of death was the best. At which he immediately, before any one could speak, said, "A sudden one."

After this, as he was in bed with his wife, all the doors and windows of the house flew open together; he was startled at the noise, and the light which broke into the room, and sat up in his bed, where by the moonshine he perceived Calpurnia fast asleep, but heard her utter in her dream some indistinct words and inarticulate groans.

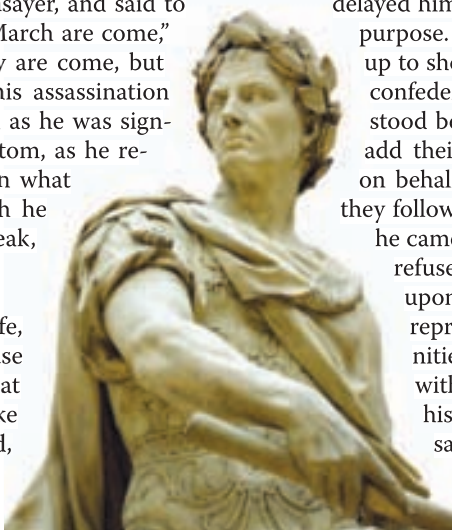
She fancied at that time she was weeping over Caesar, and holding him butchered in her arms. When it was day, she begged of Caesar, if it were possible, not to stir out, but to adjourn the senate to another time; and if he slighted her dreams, that she would be pleased to consult his fate by sacrifices and other kinds of divination. Nor was he himself without some suspicion and fears; for he never before discovered any womanish superstition in Calpurnia, whom he now saw in such great alarm. Upon the report which the priests made to him, that they had made several sacrifices, and still found them inauspicious, he resolved to send Antony to dismiss the senate.

In this juncture, Decimus Brutus, surnamed Albinus, one whom Caesar had such confidence in that he made him his second heir, who nevertheless was engaged in the conspiracy with the other Brutus and Cassius, fearing lest if Caesar should put off the senate to another day, spoke scoffingly and in mockery of the diviners. He asked if any one should be sent to tell the senators they might break

up for the present, and meet again when Calpurnia should chance to have better dreams?

The place which was destined for the scene of this murder, in which the senate met that day, was the same in which Pompey's statue stood, plainly showing that there was something of a supernatural influence which guided the action. As for Antony, who was firm to Caesar and a strong man, Brutus Albinus kept him outside the house, and delayed him with a long conversation contrived on purpose. When Caesar entered, the senate stood up to show their respect to him, and of Brutus's confederates, some came about his chair and stood behind it, others met him, pretending to add their petitions to those of Tillius Cimber, on behalf of his brother, who was in exile; and they followed him with their joint applications till he came to his seat. When he was sat down, he refused to comply with their requests, and upon their urging him, further began to reproach them severely for their importunities, when Tillius, laying hold of his robe with both his hands, pulled it down from his neck, which was the signal for the assault. Casca gave him the first cut in the neck, which was not mortal nor dangerous, as coming from one who at the beginning of such a bold action was probably very much disturbed;

Caesar immediately turned about, and laid his hand upon the dagger. And both of them at the same time cried out, he that received the blow, in Latin, "Vile Casca, what does this mean?" and he that gave it, in Greek to his brother, "Brother, help!" Whichever way he turned, Caesar met with blows, and was encompassed like a wild beast in the toils on every side. For it had been agreed they should each of them make a thrust at him, and flesh themselves with his blood; for which reason Brutus also gave him one stab in the groin. Some say that he fought and resisted all the rest, shifting his body to avoid the blows, and calling out for help, but that when he saw Brutus's sword drawn, he covered his face with his robe and submitted, letting himself fall, whether it were by chance or that he was pushed in that direction by his murderers, at the foot of the pedestal on which Pompey's statue stood, and which was thus wetted with his blood. So that Pompey himself seemed to have presided, as it were, over the revenge done upon his adversary, who lay here at his feet, and breathed out his soul through his multitude of wounds, for they say he received three-and-twenty.



BETWEEN THE LINES

Exploring the entangled web of human relationships and the many hues of sexuality, Marathi novelist, playwright and filmmaker **Sachin Kundalkar's** **COBALT BLUE** (Penguin; ₹ 399; 228 pages) is a tale of rapturous love and fierce heartbreak told with tenderness and clarity. **Jerry Pinto**, in his debut attempt at translation, retains the flavour of the Maharashtrian milieu. Originally published in Marathi in 2006, this



bold love triangle involving a sister, a brother and a mysterious paying guest, was way ahead of its time. Weaving two relationships together, one homosexual and another heterosexual, the narrative delves into the vacuum of individual heartbreak and skilfully paints the disparate islands of isolation coexisting under a

roof. The narrative, though experimental, deftly complements the content. The monologue takes the form of a direct address to the missing young man in the first half; while the second half takes the form of a diary the sister writes. In the bargain, we are treated to different perspectives of the

same event, viewed differently by the siblings. The brother, through his short, broken sentences, conveys his feelings of loss, longing and betrayal. In contrast, the sister's mourning, which takes the form of depression and psychiatric sessions, is more tangible. Kundalkar's prose is marked by unbridled earthiness.

ISLAND OF A THOUSAND MIRRORS (Hachette India; ₹ 399; 230 pages) is a dark but visually striking tale about love and loss set in the tense period of the Sri Lankan Civil War, focusing on the lives of Yasodhara Ranasinghe and Saraswathi. While not getting into the technicalities of the war, in her debut work **Nayomi Munaweera** brings out the complexities of ethnic intolerance when faced with love and fear, outlining the events leading up to the war that shaped the fates of these two girls. When the violence and political tensions began in 1983, young Yasodhara's Sinhalese parents immigrated to Los Angeles, where they worked at building a new life, leaving behind their beloved island and all its warmth. While Yasodhara learns about love and heartbreak in the land of golden opportunities, back in Sri Lanka, Saraswathi, a Tamil girl, learns about the pain of giving up her dreams. Growing up amid brainwashed rebels and revolutionary ideas, Saraswathi's dreams of becoming a schoolteacher go bust, as she is forced to join the Tamil Tigers. From an innocent bystander of war crimes, she turns into a ruthless perpetrator hailed by The Commandment. The fates of the two girls meet toward the end in Colombo, as the narrative shifts alternatively between Yasodhara, who is visiting her sister, and Saraswathi, who is on a mission to martyrdom. Brimming with eloquent imagery, this is a tale of nostalgia, fear and loss.



According to the National Crime Records Bureau, one farmer kills himself every 37 minutes in India. Farmer suicides may be a grievous issue, but **Sonora Jha** handles it tactfully in her debut novel without being fatalistic about it. A fictional story grounded in the reality of parched lands and harrowing suicide rates, **FOREIGN** (Random House; ₹ 399; 304 pages) is about Katya Misra, a single mother settled in Seattle, whose life turns around when her son runs away to India in search of his father. The book is set in Seattle and Dhanpur



(Maharashtra), with the two worlds colliding and tumbling together in a web of suicide, politics and betrayal. Getting to the root of the agrarian problem, identifying the desperation that drives farmers to end their lives, the writer holds a mirror to the contemporary reality of rural India by focusing on the sub plot of Gayatri and Bajirao and their struggles to make both ends meet when crops fail. As money-lending sharks abound, waiting to move in for the kill, Bajirao carries with him a lethal vial of pesticide, hidden from his wife, who turns out to be the hero of the story thrice over, but at an enormous personal cost.

The one among the many

Transcend matter and become one with the Spirit, urges **Jaya Row**

The *Vedas* speak of oneness, unity and equality. Yet we experience diversity, differences and demarcations. Enlightened masters have merged with the Spirit, which is the same in all. They see the one, unifying substratum of the universe. From the vantage point of *atman*, they enjoy the diversity. We see matter which differs in different beings. We feel threatened by the variations, are affected and get crushed by them.

Michelangelo said in every block of wood there is a beautiful statue. You only have to remove the excess material. The statue lying beneath is the Spirit. Matter is the excess material that impedes the vision of Divinity. The spiritual path helps us rise above matter to unfold the Spirit.

Matter consists of three *guna* or qualities: *sattva* (purity), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (apathy). Just as the three primary colours combine to create the myriad colours in the world, the three *guna* blend to form the variety of beings. *Guna* in Sanskrit means rope. Woven together, they bind us to the world. All humans have all three *guna*. It is the proportion that makes the difference.

Tamas is the state of ignorance, inertia and carelessness. In *tamas*, people are oblivious of their potential, have no sense of purpose and take shelter in intoxication and a life of reckless abandon. Steeped in delusion, a *tamasika* person is not aware of the dignity of human life and finds pleasure in sloth, indifference and aberrant behaviour. All the talent and skill inherent in the person lies untapped and wasted. It is akin to trying to drive a powerful sports car with the engine turned off.

Rajas is restless activity fuelled by desire, selfishness and ego. *Rajasika* people are competitive and ambitious, driven by one-upmanship. But *rajas* carries a huge price. It

causes struggle, strife and stress, leading to costly mistakes in life. A *rajasika* person imagines an antagonistic world of scarcity and peril. S/he focuses on fighting imaginary battles to gain supremacy over the world. The more s/he grabs for exclusive enjoyment of all that the world has to offer, the more s/he loses. S/he is thus a lonely soul, alienated from family and friends. *Rajas* is like driving a sports car with the brakes on.



Sattva is the state of serenity and purity. Free from the stranglehold of obsession with self, a *sattvika* person has a clear vision of the transcendental and strives to get there. A *sattvika* person sees blessing and abundance and is grateful for all that s/he has received. S/he is motivated to serve the world in a spirit of thanksgiving. Resources then come in greater measure to one who is generous and inclusive. In *sattva* one breaks through the barrier of desire and ego and takes off into sublime realms like a Concorde that breaks the sound barrier.

Only a *sattvika* person excels, motivated by a higher ideal, the highest being Self-realisation. *Rajasika* people win some, lose some, remaining where they were. *Tamasika* ones are on a dangerous downward spiral to self-destruction.

The solution lies in understanding the three *guna* and how they operate in you and others. Identify and cultivate the *sattva* in you. Refine *rajas* with a higher purpose, expanding the mind to accommodate the interests of others. Fight *tamas* on a war footing with strict deadlines and exercises to overcome inertia. In the end, aspire to transcend the *guna* and become one with the Spirit. Then you will be undisturbed and enjoy the dance of the *guna* in the world. You will realise the unity in the diversity of beings and be free from the trauma of birth, death, old age and disease. You will taste the nectarine bliss of *atman*.

Jaya Row is the founder of Vedanta Vision (www.vedantavision.org) and founder-managing trustee of Vedanta Trust. Row travels extensively, interpreting Vedanta to audiences in India and abroad

QUEEN of motion pictures



Breathtaking sets, opulent pageantry, a passionate affair between the lead actors resulting in a censure from the Pope for “erotic vagrancy”; *Cleopatra* had all the right reasons to hit the headlines when it premiered on 12 June, 1963. But, despite being the most awaited and highest grossing film of the year, earning \$26 million, the film ended up almost bankrupting 20th Century Fox, thanks to its gargantuan \$44 million production spend.

Call it destiny; though African-American actress Dorothy Dandridge was selected for the lead role, it was Elizabeth Taylor who went on to play the irresistible Queen of Egypt, a role that became the defining image of her epic cinematic career. Taylor, who took home a record \$7 million for the film, also met and fell in love with a rugged Richard Burton (essaying the role of Mark Antony) on the sets. However, during the shoot, Taylor nearly died of pneumonia and was rushed to a hospital. She had to undergo tracheotomy; the resulting scar is visible in certain close-ups. The film also earned Taylor a Guinness World Record for the ‘Most Costume Changes in a Film,’ totalling 65. With Taylor falling ill and weather problems in London necessitating production relocation to Rome, the budget overshot astronomically.

Helmed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, the film won four Academy Awards, including the Oscars for Art Direction, Cinematography, Costume Design and Visual Effects. The movie left a strong impact on the cultural and literary milieu of the times. While pop art pioneer Andy Warhol considered *Cleopatra* the most influential pop artefact of the 1960s, New Zealand band The Mockers’ song *Cleopatra* parodied Taylor the diva. French comic book *Asterix and Cleopatra*, published the same year, also lampooned the film, mocking its massive cast and sets by claiming it to be the “greatest story ever drawn...14 litres of India ink, 30 brushes, 62 soft pencils, one hard pencil, 27 rubbers, 1,984 sheets of paper, 2 typewriters, 366 pints of beer went into its creation!”

THIS MONTH, THAT YEAR: JULY 1963

- On 19 July, a patient at Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, became the first person to get an artificial heart pump implant.
- On 20 July, an attempt to reconcile the differences between the Soviet Communist Party and the Chinese Communist Party ended in failure.
- On 26 July, the US-based National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) launched Syncom 2, the first geostationary satellite.
- On 31 July, the Peerage Act 1963 received royal assent in the United Kingdom, opening membership in the House of Lords to women.

“Spread love everywhere you go. Let no one ever come to you without leaving happier.

— Mother Teresa (1910-1997)

NANOFACTURE

n. To manufacture something at the molecular level using nanotechnology.

Example. Hope's chosen medium is **nanofacture**, a neologism that describes fabrication at a molecular level. He builds his paintings using a cobbled-together toolkit of hard and software, starting with a molecular modelling software called PyMol and ending with a RepRap 3D printer.

—Kelsey Campbell-Dollaghan, “Artist ‘**nanofactures**’ paintings using a 3D printer and molecular modelling software”, Gizmodo, 24 April 2013

Cupertino effect

n. The tendency for automatic spell-checking software to replace some words with inappropriate or incorrect alternatives.

Example. And then the **Cupertino effect**: typos introduced by the very ‘autocorrect’ software intended to save us from error. Ah, the typographical treason of these invisible servants!

—Ruth Walker, “The wages of typos—in pounds and pence”, The Christian Science Monitor, 10 November 2011

Twintern

n. An intern hired to monitor and post messages to a company's social media accounts. Twitter + intern.

Example. A **twintern** is a graduate or university student who completes an internship at a company and has a focus on social media, including—but not restricted to—Facebook and Twitter.

—Cara Jenkins, “Interns help firms turn on social media”, The Advertiser, 8 January 2011

Austerian

n. A person who believes that extreme fiscal austerity is the key to solving economic problems, particularly for countries carrying huge debt loads.

Example. **Austerians**, as the champions of fiscal prudence are called, perhaps a little uncharitably, are in retreat because an emphasis on deficit cutting has failed to generate a convincing recovery.

—Kevin Carmichael, “**Austerians**’ are reeling as G20 avoids mention of hard fiscal targets”, The Globe and Mail, 21 April 2013

Cli-fi

n. A literary or movie genre featuring dystopian stories of Earth affected by extreme climate change. Climate + fiction.

Example. Odds are the latest in what seems to be an emerging literary genre. Over the past decade, more and more writers have begun to set their novels and short stories in worlds, not unlike our own, where the Earth's systems are noticeably off-kilter. The genre has come to be called climate fiction—**cli-fi** for short.

—Angela Evancie, “So hot right now: Has climate change created a new literary genre?”, National Public Radio, 20 April 2013

FOOD FOREST

n. A garden that includes mostly food-producing plants, particularly fruit and nut trees, fruit bushes, vegetables, and herbs.

Example. She calls that a **food forest**—a diverse and multilayered mix of tree canopy, berry-laden shrubs, vines, groundcover and planting beds. “You can create a food forest garden in any aesthetic style in a typical urban, suburban or rural backyard,” Bloom said.

—Dean Fosdick, “Backyard chickens? Give them a **food forest**”, Associated Press, 26 March 2013

GET-OFF-MY-LAWN

adj. Cantankerous and old-fashioned or bourgeois, particularly with respect to values or ideas. Also: hey-kids-get-off-my-lawn.

Example. From there, though, the film turns into a disorganised rant, jumping from Uneeda Biscuits to the Glass-Steagall Act to kids and their infernal text messaging and anything else that occurred to Mr. Hoffman or the seemingly random collection of people he allows to spout off on camera. The whole enterprise has a **get-off-my-lawn** feel; it tries to pass off whining and a rose-coloured-glasses view of the past as insight.

—Neil Genzlinger, “Analysing history before the dust settles,” *The New York Times*, 16 August 2012

Organ recital

n. A long-winded recitation of one’s ailments, particularly those related to or caused by ageing.

Example. Often it starts with an innocent greeting, such as “How are you?” When we were younger, the answer was usually, “Fine, how are you?” Lately, however, with friends of a certain age, I find that the question will open into an extended discourse about health and ageing, reminiscent of the classic Buddhist reflection on the 32 parts of the body—a report on the liver, lungs, joints, muscles, kidneys, heart—a conversation sometimes known as the **organ recital**.

—Wes Nisker, “The practice of geezing”, *The Huffington Post*, 6 February 2013

Kitchen confidential

BUZZ

Learn how to make divine red velvet cupcakes—in your own kitchen! Hone your baking skills with family and friends with food blogger and consultant Saeë Koranna-Khandekar’s baking and dessert-making classes, ‘Bring Home My Jhola’. You use your own equipment and basic ingredients like sugar, flour, and eggs; she takes care of the special stuff, from herbs and vanilla bean to a variety of extracts. Just get in touch with her and she will draw up a menu with dishes that can be made according to the equipment in your kitchen and, most important, your budget. Call (0) 9870243193 or email myjhola@gmail.com; check out her blog <http://www.myjhola.in> for more details!



You can become blind by seeing each day as a similar one. Each day is a different one; each day brings a miracle of its own. It's just a matter of paying attention to this miracle.

—Author Paulo Coelho

“Keeping the city clean is generally associated with keeping the roads litter-free. But people are gradually becoming aware that it is equally important to keep walls clean”

Col (retd) Shivraj Kumar, 81, Delhi, on spearheading a campaign against posters and hoardings



Anshuman Akash Jha

He retired from the Army three decades ago. But the fight is far from over for **Col Shivraj Kumar**. The enemy, this time around, is not from across the border, but the ugly posters and banners and humongous hoardings and billboards that deface our own cities. This 81 year-old poster boy for cleanliness, along with wife Laxmi Kumar, 76, is determined to ensure that all major Indian cities become poster-free zones. It all started one rainy evening in 2009, when the couple stepped out to remove soggy posters from the walls around their home in Delhi. What essentially started as a cleaning spree around the house soon spread to the neighbourhood; it grew into an ambitious ‘Poster *Hatao*’ campaign, backed by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. Soon, Malviya Nagar market, Punjabi Bagh, Basant Lok, Munirka and Vasant Enclave shed their extra baggage to sport a clean look. Come Saturday, the couple steps out, armed with bottle openers and iron plates, to peel off posters. They visit various colonies to spread awareness and garner volunteers for their mission. “I belong to the pre-Independence

generation,” says the colonel. “Posters were the only medium to reach out to the masses during the freedom movement. Now, with advanced technology, there are plenty of other ways to communicate.” Besides the municipal authorities in Delhi, their campaign has also found favour with Delhi University (DU), Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation. “The vice-chancellors of both DU and JNU have put notes on their websites requesting poster-free election campaigns,” he says. “Even Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit has promised a poster and garbage-free Delhi in her election manifesto.” Emphasising that he is looking for more volunteers and not funds to carry out the campaign, the colonel currently has his sights trained on the walls in and around Gurgaon and Faridabad. However, it’s his wife who has the last word, “Everyone says we should have cities like Shanghai. I think we need to have examples from our own country. Why shouldn’t people say that there should be clean and beautiful cities like Delhi, Mumbai or Chennai?”

—Ambica Gulati

Did you know...

Vaastu corrections can be done without physical shifting or alternations?

YES, WITH THE POWER OF PYRAMID-YANTRA®

What is Vaastu?

Vaastu is an ancient Indian science of architecture and buildings which helps in making a congenial setting or a place to live and work in a most scientific way taking advantage of nature, its elements and energy fields for enhanced wealth, health, prosperity and happiness.

Benefits of Vaastu

It is beneficial as it is a bridge between man, material and nature and above all it is practical. Build your house according to the guidelines provided by vaastu and lead a healthy and happy life.

Vaastu corrections and modern living

In this jet-age we are living in ready flats, offices and houses. Also with all modern style and facilities. So, to break a wall or shift a room physically according to traditional Vastu is nearly impossible. Still you want the benefits of Vastu, what do you do?

Revolutionary Solution - Pyramid Vaastu!

Here comes a practical and result oriented method - PyraVastu®. Now you can correct your Vastu defects with the help of pre-programmed and FaMa® charged Pyramid-Yantra. This method virtually makes your house or office Vastu-okay with the energy of pyramids. Now you can live in the same place and can lead a healthy and happy life.

Inventions and Research

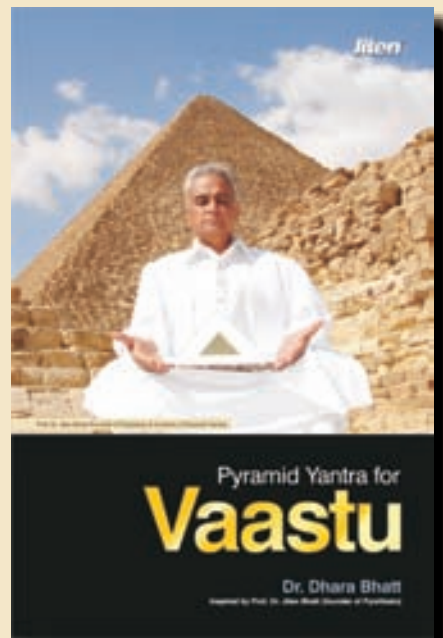
With over 33 years of research and scientific theory of Pyramid Yantra it is used world-wide today.

Results with Pyramid-Yantra

Today over 3.7 million people are living happily in PyraVastu okay houses and office with the power of pyramids! You could be the next...

Plan your actions TODAY

Start with a small experiment of pyramid power or read this book. You could also get in touch with a PyraVastu Consultant in your city. To know more please call our Authorized Center.



Your Pyramid Vaastu Bible

14th Edition (Book price: ₹ 195) Pages: 224
Translated in 9 major languages

Call Toll Free: 1800-233-2658
or Visit: www.PyramidVastu.com

3700000 people benefitted with PyraVastu®

Jiten® | Pyramid

Sahara Hospital Offers Round-the-clock Superspeciality Services of

Advanced Heart Care Centre

Sahara hospital is a leader in providing advance healthcare in this part of the country. Complete solution available for all heart ailments supported by expert doctors, intensive cardiac care unit, high end cath lab and advance operation theaters. Our CTVS Unit has performed more than five hundred cardiac surgeries till date with good results. We are providing dedicated Mobile Coronary Care ambulances with all the essential monitoring and resuscitative equipments to shift any serious heart patient.

FACILITIES IN CARDIOTHORACIC SURGERY

- Beating heart Coronary Artery Bypass Graft (OPCABG)
- Heart Valve Surgery
- Congenital Cardiac Surgery
- Minimally Invasive Cardiac Surgery (Key Hole Surgery)
- Thoracic and Vascular surgery

FACILITIES IN CARDIOLOGY

- Coronary Angiography
- Angioplasty (PTCA) for Coronary Diseases
- Peripheral Angiography & Interventions
- Permanent pacemaker implantation
- 2D Echocardiography and Doppler Studies
- Trans esophageal Echocardiography
- 24 hours Holter Monitoring
- Tread mill stress test
- Cardiac CT and MRI

DIAGNOSTIC SERVICES AVAILABLE ROUND-THE-CLOCK

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| • MRI (16 Channel 1.5 Tesla) | • Urodynamics Study Lab |
| • 64 Slices CT Scan | • Endoscopy Suite |
| • Cardiac Cath Lab | • Automated Lab Medicine |
| • Portable CT Scan | • Ultra Modern Blood Bank |
| • Mamography | • Audiometry |
| • Digital X-Ray | • Respiratory Lab |
| • Ultrasound Voluson with 4D with Colour Doppler | • Colposcopy |

